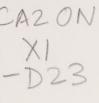


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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 26 September 1995

Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk Claude L. DesRosiers

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 26 septembre 1995



Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 September 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 septembre 1995

The First Session of the 36th Parliament of the province of Ontario opened at 3 pm for the dispatch of business pursuant to a proclamation of His Honour, Henry N.R. Jackman, Lieutenant Governor of the province.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to state that he does not see fit to declare the causes of the summoning of the present Legislature of this province until a Speaker of this House shall have been chosen according to law; but tomorrow, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, His Honour will declare the causes of the calling of this Legislature.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to call upon you to elect one of your number to preside over your deliberations as Speaker. Therefore, I ask for nominations for the office of Speaker.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I, Mrs McLeod, move, seconded by Mr Laughren, that Mr Morin, member for the electoral district of Carleton East, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Je, Madame McLeod, propose, appuyée par M. Laughren, que M. Morin, député de la circonscription de Carleton-Est, prenne le fauteuil en tant que Président de l'Assemblée législative.

Clerk of the House: Does the honourable member for Carleton East accept the nomination?

M. Gilles E. Morin (Carleton-Est): Oui, Monsieur le greffier, j'accepte. I accept.

Clerk of the House: Are there any further nominations?

Mr Frank F. Klees (York-Mackenzie): I, Frank Klees, the member for York-Mackenzie, move, seconded by Frances Lankin, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, that Margaret Marland, member for the electoral district of Mississauga South, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Clerk of the House: Does the member for Mississauga South accept the nomination?

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I do accept the nomination.

Clerk of the House: Are there any further nominations?

Mr Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): I, Leo Jordan,

the member for Lanark-Renfrew, move, seconded by Tony Ruprecht, the member for Parkdale, that Allan K. McLean, member for the electoral district of Simcoe East, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Clerk of the House: Does the honourable member accept the nomination?

Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East): Yes, I accept the nomination.

Clerk of the House: Are there any further nominations?

There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed.

We will now go into a short period while the list of candidates is being prepared, and it'll be prepared shortly. The ballot boxes will be brought out and the voting booths will be set up on the table and we'll be getting into the voting procedure very shortly.

As has been outlined in the various kits that have been provided, members on the right of the House should file behind and go through the desk there and come and vote on the right-hand side of the table. Members on the left-hand side of the House should follow the same route, register at the table and come and vote on the left-hand side of the table and deposit their ballots at the end of the table

The first ballot's colour will be yellow. During the voting, as the voting is nearing its end, I will advise that we're closing the voting in about five minutes. Once the voting is terminated, the clerk assistants will retire to a room with the scrutineers, will count the ballots, and then when they are ready to come back in to announce the results of the first ballot, we will ring the bells for five minutes.

As you know, there won't be a result published, but either the first ballot will give us a new Speaker or there will be a need for a second ballot in which one of the members will be removed from the list of candidates. If we need a second ballot, then the same procedure will be followed.

Could we get the voting booths on the table, please.

Now let the voting begin. I would ask everybody to proceed to register at the tables and come by and vote.

Clerk of the House: Any member who has not yet voted, this would be the right time to do it.

By our count, every member who is in the chamber has voted, so we are about to remove the voting booths, if that could be done, please.

I would now invite the two clerk assistants and the Sergeant at Arms to retire with the scrutineers for the counting of the ballots, please. Five minutes before the count is announced, the bells will ring. In the meantime, if you want to go on with the conversations you were having before and relax, you will be advised five minutes before the result is announced.

1600

Clerk of the House: There will be a second ballot. The two candidates remaining after the first ballot are the member for Mississauga South, Mrs Marland, and the member for Simcoe East, Mr McLean. Does any candidate wish to withdraw at this time? If not, we will go on with a second ballot, following the same procedure we followed in the first ballot.

1635

Clerk of the House: I declare that you have elected Mr Allan McLean, the member for Simcoe East, as your next Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): For those of you who thought the summer was short, there are others of us who thought the summer was long, and to be here today and to be elected as your Speaker is an honour bestowed upon me that I will never forget. It is an honour, and I hope that, over the period of time I have the opportunity to sit in the Speaker's chair, I will be fair and honest with every member of this Legislature, that I will fulfil my duties to the best of my ability, and I would hope at the end of my term of office that you will

consider it a job well done. I hope I fulfil that commitment, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity to be elected as your Speaker.

Today I'm honoured to have several members of my family in the gallery to see this occasion. Thank you, members of the Legislature.

Applause.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As the House appropriately applauds and congratulates you, I think it's also appropriate that the House, being assembled as it is, thank and applaud and congratulate your predecessor, Speaker Warner, for his service to this assembly for the last four and a half years.

Applause.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that the House now adjourn until 2 pm tomorrow, Wednesday, September 27, 1995.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of this House that the motion carry? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until 2 pm tomorrow, Wednesday, September 27, 1995.

The House adjourned at 1640.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Allan K. McLean

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller Sergeant at Arms / Sergent d'armes: Thomas Stelling

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	ND	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Finance / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	opposition deputy whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	opposition chief whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	New Democratic deputy whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	New Democratic House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	opposition deputy whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda	Guelph	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance, government House leader / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Fisher, Barb	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward- Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	L	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
Jackson, Hon/ L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio, Workers' Compensation Board / ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de la Commission des accidents du travail
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	
Johnson, Hon / L'hon Dave	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	
Jordan, Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	New Democratic whip / whip du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	
McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	Speaker / Président
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	opposition deputy House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to minister responsible for native affairs adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Rae, Bob	York South / -Sud	ND	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E. J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdalė	L	

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Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
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Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	11
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
Jackson, Hon/ L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio, Workers' Compensation Board / ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de la Commission des accidents du travail
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Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
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Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	New Democratic whip / whip du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	
McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	Speaker / Président
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Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	opposition deputy House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Rae, Bob	York South / -Sud	ND	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E. J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités				
Sampson, Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances				
Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme				
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L					
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement				
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC					
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	New Democratic deputy House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique				
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation				
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC					
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation				
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme				
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.	Carleton	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce				
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC					
Stockwell, Chris	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC					
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC					
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général				
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.	Markham	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires				
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement				
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC					
Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G & Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales ; ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones				
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC					
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND					
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé				
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail				
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion				
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND					
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation				







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Nº 2

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 27 September 1995

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 27 septembre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 September 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 septembre 1995

The House met at 1400.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.

Hon Henry N.R. Jackman (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me. If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not to the assembly whose servant I am and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to the Queen and country, hereby claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all reasonable times and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favourable consideration.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Speaker, I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the assembly to Her Majesty's person and government, and, not doubting that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temperance and prudence, he grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow the constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the assembly shall have ready access to His Honour upon all suitable occasions and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Hon Henry N.R. Jackman (Lieutenant Governor): Mr Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly, ladies and gentlemen:

I have the honour of welcoming you to the opening of the first session of the 36th Parliament of the province of Ontario.

Today's speech could have been among the shortest in Ontario's history. The agenda is already clear, and it might suffice to say simply, "Your government is doing what it said it would do, and it will continue."

It will continue because...

People want jobs—for this generation and the next.

Ontarians want value for their tax dollars and an end to government waste.

Families want safe communities.

We all want a sound health care system.

Parents want schools where children learn.

We want every Ontarian to have a fair chance at a

productive, independent life.

On June 8, the people of Ontario voted for major change. The new government accepts that responsibility, and will deliver.

It does so mindful of the enormous and difficult task ahead.

Over the past decade, Ontario has lost its way. Workers fear for their jobs. The jobless despair for the future. Public debt and deficits sap the strength and vitality of our economy and threaten the legacy we leave to our children. Taxes are too high—government spending too great—yet services have deteriorated.

This administration is charting a new course, setting priorities and sticking to them, restructuring to ensure we can live within our means and making major change, fundamental change, in the way government works.

Through these actions spelled out in The Common Sense Revolution, the new government will restore prosperity, free the private sector to create jobs and meet the challenge of renewing Ontario.

A Prosperous Province: The foundation of prosperity is jobs. Economists know it. Business knows it. People know it.

A good paycheque allows every person to provide for his or her family, and to save for the future. Consumer spending creates more jobs. Saving provides capital for new, job-creating enterprises.

Job creation requires dual action—cutting taxes, and unshackling business, especially small business that creates most new jobs in Ontario.

Your government will encourage private sector job creation by honouring its pledge to cut provincial income tax rates, starting with its first budget. Every dollar of reduced taxes is one more dollar the factory worker in Oshawa and the forestry worker in Cochrane can spend on their families, and in doing so they are reinvesting in Ontario's economy.

1410

Working Ontarians share many of the same concerns—like Lindsay Mason, who is here today in the chamber, and Greg and Cathy Hart. These people work hard to keep a roof over their heads, place food on the table, and put something away for the future. And like most Ontarians, they've tightened their belts, but wonder when government will start to do the same.

Ms Mason and the Harts already have plans for the dollars the tax cut will return to them. For Ms Mason, it's home improvements; for the Harts, it's replacing an appliance, or new clothes for their children. Their spending and saving, multiplied by that of millions of Ontarians, will provide a direct boost to private sector job

creation this province very much needs.

Another boost to job creation will be reducing payroll taxes on business—making it easier for companies to create new jobs and hire more people.

Your government will stimulate job creation by eliminating the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll, reducing Workers' Compensation Board premiums by 5%, and abolishing the annual corporate filing fee.

Ontario's economy will also benefit from the new government's commitment to freeze the average rates charged by Ontario Hydro for five years.

During this session, your government will initiate a "red-tape review" of regulations affecting business. Restrictions that cannot be justified will be eliminated within 12 months of the review.

These measures will stimulate job creation across Ontario and bring renewal and growth to all regions of the province. While many keys to prosperity are the same province-wide, your government recognizes the distinct character and needs of each region.

The government will work to ensure the needs of all Ontarians—urban and rural, east and west, north and south—are accommodated in the delivery of services and that all Ontarians share in renewed economic opportunity and jobs.

To demonstrate its commitment to northern Ontario, your government will give northerners a greater voice by refocusing the mandate of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to reflect more local input.

A Climate for Job Creation: Prosperity depends on a cooperative environment that encourages job creation and new investment. To trigger economic growth in Ontario, your government will introduce legislation to repeal the previous government's labour legislation, Bill 40.

Gradual evolution over a half-century established labour laws that struck a careful balance between the legitimate rights of employees, trade unions and employers.

Bill 40 upset that balance, replacing it with uncertainty and tension between labour and management. Bill 40 drove jobs out of Ontario, stifled expansion, and discouraged employers and investors from locating here in the first place. To ensure strong economic growth, that delicate legislative balance must be restored.

As part of the process, the new government will introduce legislation to empower individual workers by ensuring their democratic right to a secret ballot vote prior to certification, contract ratification, or strikes.

Recognizing agriculture's importance to the provincial economy, the legislation will also protect family farms by repealing the Agricultural Labour Relations Act, Bill 91.

These steps come as no surprise. The new government's intentions were announced during debate on Bill 40 in November 1992, again when The Common Sense Revolution was released in May 1994, and again during this year's election campaign.

The people have spoken, and this government will deliver. Business and labour must respect the will of the

electorate and work cooperatively to ensure stability and labour relations harmony. Only in this way will everyone benefit. Only in this way will Ontario's economy be strengthened and grow.

Your government will also reform the Workers' Compensation Board. The board was created to protect injured workers, but as a result of poor organization, inefficiency and an unfunded liability of over \$11 billion, these original objectives have been lost or forgotten.

Ensuring safety in the workplace is a key priority of your government. A reorganized and solvent board will better protect Ontario's workers. At the same time, it will allow the government to reduce WCB payroll taxes in order to encourage job creation.

These measures and others will send a positive message across the province, through the nation and around the globe: Ontario is open for business again.

Value for Taxes: Prosperity also depends on a healthy economy offering confidence to the investor and encouragement to the business owner considering expansion.

Each year, interest payments on the accumulated provincial debt consume billions of dollars of taxpayers' money. Public debt interest has grown, on average, more than \$1 billion a year for the last five years, diverting billions of dollars that otherwise could be spent on programs. The burden of debt has damaged Ontario's credit rating and threatens the province's ability to attract investment and stimulate the economy.

People know that it does not make sense to borrow more money just to pay the interest on money they already owe. Yet that is what Ontario is doing.

Parents know that growing government debt endangers the security of their children's future.

We must get government spending under control. We cannot ignore the threat to our children's future, to our province's future. To balance our books, Ontario must continue the spending cuts begun in July.

Your government's expenditure control will enable it to balance the provincial budget by fiscal year 2000-01, and put Ontario back on the road to sound financial management.

When families are short of money, they make hard choices so they can pay the rent and keep food on the table. They live within their means. Now government must do the same.

To rescue this province from the trap of debt—to renew confidence in the economy—government must make hard decisions about what lies at the core of its responsibilities.

For example, government must ask whether Ontario taxpayers really need to own and operate their own TV broadcast network.

Government has no business using your tax dollars to lead the seventh-inning stretch at major league baseball games.

This government will not spend millions of taxpayers' dollars funding groups whose only purpose is to lobby for the expenditure of even more borrowed dollars on narrow vested interests.

Already your government is assessing which of its activities are unnecessary and which others are best left to individuals, communities or business.

It will pursue alternatives such as partnerships between government and private businesses and opening government operations to outside competition.

Two thirds of our provincial budget consists of transfer payments. A large part of these transfers fund services delivered by institutions other than the Ontario government. These organizations, which spend more provincial tax dollars than Queen's Park, have the ability and the responsibility to restructure, to control their own spending and to reduce costs. This is the only way Ontario can get its finances in order.

The new government invites its partners in the broader public sector to identify the tools they will need to increase flexibility, improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Your government is committed to introducing a new Municipal Act, and this session will launch consultations with municipalities. It also intends to dismantle Bill 163, the Planning and Development Reform Act, eliminating red tape, expediting the planning process, empowering municipalities and balancing economic and environmental interests.

Your government is serious about reducing its own size and cost. This year \$1.9 billion will be saved, but even after these savings, the province's deficit for 1995-96 will be \$8.7 billion. The new administration has only begun to meet the challenge of reducing the size and cost of government; much more remains to be done.

1420

As it reduces costs, the government will move to reduce internal duplication, offer one-stop access to services and improve delivery.

During this session, the new government will also launch a review of public agencies, boards and commissions. Agencies will be put to the test: Bodies that no longer provide value for tax dollars or whose mandate is obsolete will be eliminated.

Working people have seen the value of their paycheques dwindle over the past decade and know that politicians should not be exempt from sacrifices. Your government agrees and will lead by example.

Starting here in this chamber, the new government intends to reduce the number of politicians in Ontario. It will introduce legislation so that in the next general election voters will elect a much smaller Legislature. Your government's goal: to reduce the number of seats from 130 to Ontario's representation in the House of Commons, currently 99. This session the government will initiate talks with the federal government about common boundaries.

Your government will also introduce legislation based on the recommendations of the recently announced commission on MPP compensation. This reform will scrap the gold-plated MPP pension plan, eliminate tax-free allowances and take responsibility for setting MPPs' pay away from politicians.

As it restructures and reduces costs, your government acknowledges that Ontario is not alone in this exercise.

Canadians everywhere recognize that the status quo is not working for them any more. Canadians everywhere seek major change.

To our fellow Canadians in all parts of the country: Ontarians want to be part of a national solution to the current economic and fiscal challenge.

To our fellow Canadians who are also Quebeckers, citizens of our sister province: We appeal with an open heart and with generosity of spirit to remain within Confederation so that we might continue to work together for prosperity and equality of opportunity for all.

Safe Communities: A "justice system" that forgets victims of crime is unworthy of the name.

Feeling unsafe in our homes and on our streets makes victims of us all. There are too many stories like that of Mr Pat Haghgoo, who is here today. Mr Haghgoo is a Toronto convenience store owner who has been robbed more than a dozen times.

He puts in long hours and works hard to serve his customers and succeed in his business. He asks little of government, but he does expect government to make sure that the streets are safe and the punishment for lawless behaviour fits the crime.

The new government is committed to shifting the justice system's focus away from concern only for the criminal to include concern for the victim. It will ensure that our justice system is up to date, is more efficient and concentrates on serious crime.

As the first step in righting the balance between those who live outside the law and those who depend on the law for protection, this session your government will introduce a Victims' Bill of Rights.

A Sound Health Care System: To the office worker, the pensioner, the single parent, the farmer—to all Ontarians—a sound health care system is fundamental to the quality of our lives.

Everyone knows that simply throwing more money at health care is not the answer. The public and professionals who work in the system agree that the government does not need to spend more on health care; it needs to spend dollars far more effectively.

Within the health care budget are the potential for savings and opportunities for reinvestment. We will continue to redirect savings in ways that maximize outcomes and provide the greatest benefit to people.

Already this government has reinvested in improved dialysis treatments for kidney patients. We will improve access to care for northern and rural Ontarians who have faced the reduction or loss of hospital emergency room coverage. We will take the lead in coordinating, streamlining and better integrating the delivery of cancer care services in Ontario.

Your government will reinvest in targeted public health measures, such as immunization of children against early childhood diseases, that will keep people healthy and out of hospitals and doctors' offices.

To achieve savings and permit reinvestment, government, hospitals, providers and private sector partners must work together to manage the system efficiently, work within resources, prevent duplication, eliminate waste and combat fraud.

A Fair Chance: In the past 10 years, the number of people trapped in the welfare system has nearly tripled, while welfare expenses have quintupled. Businesses continue to receive government handouts, although businesses say they don't want them. And employment equity legislation enforces discrimination and hiring quotas in the workplace.

Previous governments spent billions of taxed and borrowed dollars on these programs and sank deeper into debt, while jobs disappeared and the economy dragged.

Ontarians know this is wrong. They want a welfare system that doesn't create dependency, but ends it. They want businesses to grow through hard work and creativity, not tax-funded freebies. And they want equal opportunity in the workplace, not legislated quotas.

Your government has already initiated changes designed to give all Ontarians a fair chance at a productive, independent life.

In July it announced that social assistance rates will be adjusted so that on average they are 10% higher than the average of the other nine provinces. To encourage initiative, current recipients will be able to earn back the difference between the old and new rates without having this income clawed back.

Your government promised to support the most vulnerable in our society; welfare benefits for seniors, persons with disabilities and their families have not been reduced.

The new government is implementing waste and fraud control measures, including tighter requirements for eligibility. Welfare eligibility for 16- and 17-year-olds has been curtailed and will be phased out.

The centrepiece of this government's strategy to convert welfare from a handout to a hand-up is mandatory workfare and learnfare—a reform to which your government remains as committed today as ever.

During this session, the new government will begin to require able-bodied welfare recipients, except single parents with small children, to perform community service or enrol in work or training programs in exchange for their benefits. Those who refuse to participate will lose their benefits.

Condemned to a life of hopelessness, the children of welfare are the greatest casualties of the system. To ensure a brighter future, your government will establish programs, including a school nutrition initiative, to provide children the support and encouragement they need.

To restore fairness in hiring, in this session the Legislature will be asked to repeal legislated quotas, including the Employment Equity Act. To help employers maintain discrimination-free workplaces, the new government will implement a non-legislative equal opportunity plan that supports education and training, the 'elimination of barriers to equal opportunity, and sharing expertise and experience among workplace partners.

In the longer term, your government will reform the Ontario Human Rights Commission to ensure the commission fulfils its mandate to help victims of discrimination effectively and efficiently.

A fair society protects the interests and autonomy of vulnerable people and treats them with dignity. This must be done without unduly burdening service providers and families or creating a costly, complex bureaucracy.

Your government will introduce legislation to repeal the Advocacy Act and to streamline the Substitute Decisions Act and the Consent to Treatment Act. A new and better system will support the interests of vulnerable people.

Ontarians are a generous people. Today, thousands of volunteers, from Cornwall to Kenora, work to make their communities better places to live. The parliamentary assistant to the Premier will lead a government initiative to promote and encourage this volunteerism in our province. Neighbours helping shut-in seniors, corporations sponsoring nutrition programs for children, service clubs funding community projects, private sector employees and executives volunteering for public service—this is the spirit of Ontario. Your government will support and nurture that spirit. All members of the Legislature are invited to participate.

1430

Excellence in Education and Training: Ontario taxpayers annually spend more than \$14 billion on elementary and secondary schools. But the quality of our education system ranks behind countries such as Japan, Ireland and Germany.

We have too many children who can't read, too many children who can't use a computer, too many children who don't have the skills required for today's jobs.

Recognizing the importance of education to Ontario's future, your government is committed to providing value for parents and taxpayers, while ensuring excellence in teaching.

As promised, the new government will honour its commitment to classroom education. However, funding this priority means school boards must make responsible choices in allocating their resources.

By restructuring, working cooperatively at local levels, streamlining top-heavy administration and bureaucracy, reducing the number of politicians and removing waste and inefficiency, school boards will be able to reduce overall costs while maintaining high-quality classroom education for students.

For its part, your government will give communities the flexibility they need to make these choices and improve efficiency. This session it will introduce legislation to restore junior kindergarten as a local option, starting in the 1996-97 school year.

Within the classroom, the Harris government will ensure a demanding core curriculum, regular testing of students and standardized report cards.

Renewing Our Pride: The decisions made by your government since the election have not been easy, or taken lightly. But action will continue as long as necessary to restore prosperity through a balanced budget and job-creating tax cuts.

The new government has been open about its inten-

tions. It wants to work cooperatively with all Ontarians to build a better future. Greyhound bus mechanic Earl Smith, who is with us here today, spoke for many voters when—two days after the election—he reminded Mike Harris that people expect this government to live up to its promises, and will be watching.

Your government acknowledges this, and invites everyone to become a partner in the agenda for change. To obtain a copy of this speech outlining the new government's direction, Ontarians can call 1-800-668-9938.

Your government's goal is to make Ontario a place in which we can once again take pride.

Ontarians won't get there by clinging to the status quo. We stand at a decisive moment in the province's history. Major change points the course to a better future.

The path to a renewed province is difficult and demanding. But this government is prepared.

Prepared to work hard.

Prepared to give total commitment.

Prepared to set priorities and stick to them.

Prepared to lead by example.

Today, your new government rededicates itself to the restoration of hope and prosperity to Ontario—rededicates itself to The Common Sense Revolution.

May Divine Providence attend your deliberations. In our Sovereign's name, I thank you. God bless the Queen and Canada.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I beg to inform the House that to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of His Honour's speech and will now read it.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF

Mr Eves moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 1, An Act to amend the Executive Council Act / Projet de loi 1, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): By long-standing tradition, the first bill introduced in the Legislature is an initiative that has not been mentioned in the speech from the throne.

This practice, which dates back hundreds of years, symbolizes the assembly's independence from the crown and reflects the collective right of members to address the Legislature's own priorities before attending to other business.

While the custom has fallen into disuse from time to

time, the member for Nipissing, before he became Premier, defended its importance as a symbol of the rights of all members in this chamber. I am confident that the members from both sides of the House would agree that the Bill 1 convention is worthy of respect and should be preserved.

This bill amends the Executive Council Act to recognize the streamlining of ministries and the reduced size of cabinet, which members know is the smallest in recent years. As the law passed by this House to establish the cabinet and its structure, the Executive Council Act is itself a symbol that the government and the cabinet are accountable to the Legislature.

The amendments that I propose this afternoon would strengthen the accountability by confirming the Legislature's approval of a smaller, less costly cabinet and, ultimately, of a smaller, more efficient government.

MOTIONS

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to this House be taken into consideration tomorrow, Thursday, September 28, 1995.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I beg to inform the House that Mrs McLeod, the member for the electoral district of Fort William, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

MEMBERS' ROLL

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has laid upon the table the roll of members elected at the general election of 1995.

ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): On a matter of privilege, Mr Speaker: I will be brief, and I certainly don't want to interrupt a party, and a party it appears to be today, but on I think a very fundamental matter of privilege, Mr Speaker, I want to report to you today that a number of members from a number of political parties who tried to gain entrance to this building—in my case, at about 1:30 today—were blocked and denied access by several security people, who have a difficult job, and I understand that. The difficulty I had was that today, for the first time in 20 years, I faced staff of this place who know that I am a member here and who would not let me or some other people who they know to be members into this building to take their seats for His Honour's address today.

I can't imagine a more fundamental point of privilege. I know it is your first day and I don't want to add to your burdens, but I must say that over my 20 years of experience in this place I've seen my share of demonstrations and I've participated in some, but I do not recall a time when honourable members who presented themselves well before the hour that proceedings were to begin were denied access to the building, having shown

their identity cards to people who knew them.

I simply say that for me that is a fundamental matter of privilege. I don't know how it happened. I would ask you and your good staff to investigate, to give myself and others who were denied the right to hear His Honour's address in person today a full explanation as to how it happened and to give us every assurance that it will never happen again.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member from Windsor, on the same point of privilege?

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, if I might, when you're looking into this matter, I would like to add that there are a number of questions about security around this place in the last couple of months. I'm amazed that even when there are now scrums before and after cabinet that access is very much protected by the security guards around the Legislature, which has never been the case in the 18 years that I've been around here.

In addition, we had a number of calls from individuals who were participating in the democratic right to protest out in front of this Legislature today who, again the first time in my time around here, were denied access to the public address system and the normal facilities that this Legislature provides demonstrators who are demonstrating in favour of or against governments. These decisions were never consulted on with House leaders or members of the assembly, I understand, or the government House leader. None of the members were consulted on these rules. I'd like to know who is setting policy for security around this place, and I want to make sure this remains the people's Parliament and not just the Parliament of the government.

The Speaker: I want to thank the members for bringing it to my attention. I will take it under advisement and I will study it and report back to this House.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move that notwithstanding standing order 8(a), the House do now adjourn until 1:30 pm tomorrow.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The House adjourned at 1445.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)		Services sociaux et communautaires
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	ministre du Développement économique, du	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Rob (PC)
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Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Chris (PC)		ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
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P* 4 V - 4	chef de l'opposition	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oakville South / -Sud	
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	l'Environnement et de l'Energie	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
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Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)	Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti				
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Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)				
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)				
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)				
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)				
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Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)				
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St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)				
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)				
St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon AI (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires				

procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones Wilson Heights Kwinter, Monte (L) Windsor-Riverside Cooke, David S. (ND) Windsor-Sandwich Pupatello, Sandra (L) Windsor-Walkerville Duncan, Dwight (L) municipales et du Logement Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of York Centre / -Centre Boushy, Dave (PC) Transportation / ministre des Transports Martin, Tony (ND) York East / -Est Parker, John L. (PC) York Mills Tumbull, David (PC) Scarborough-Agincourt Phillips, Gerry (L) York-Mackenzie Klees, Frank (PC) Scarborough Centre/-Centre Newman, Dan (PC) York South / -Sud Rae, Bob (ND) Scarborough East / -Est Gilchrist, Steve (PC) Yorkview Sergio, Mario (L) Scarborough-Ellesmere Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs

Constituency

Circonscription

Scarborough North / -Nord

Scarborough West / -Ouest

Simcoe Centre / -Centre

Simcoe East / -Est

Sudbury

Timiskaming

Simcoe West / - Ouest

Sudbury East / -Est

Victoria-Haliburton

Waterloo North / -Nord

Wentworth East / -Est

Wentworth North / -Nord

Welland-Thorold

Wellington

Willowdale

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Sarnia

Sault Ste Marie /

Sault-Sainte-Marie

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

Member/Party

Curling, Alvin (L)

Brown, Jim (PC)

ministre de la Santé

Bartolucci, Rick (L)

des Mines

Martel, Shelley (ND) Ramsay, David (L)

Labour / ministre du Travail

Kormos, Peter (ND)

Arnott, Ted (PC)

Skarica, Toni (PC)

Doyle, Ed (PC)

Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)

Député(e) / Parti

McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K. (PC) Speaker /

Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of

Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of

Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attornev General, minister responsible for native affairs /

Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre du Développement du Nord et

Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Health /



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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 28 September 1995

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 28 septembre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 September 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 septembre 1995

The House met at 1331. Prayers.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Please join me in welcoming the first group of pages to serve the 36th Parliament of Ontario:

Brandi Allingham, Leeds-Grenville; Lisa Bevilacqua, York Centre; Robert Bickford, Fort William; Allan Boynton, Dufferin-Peel; Taryn Burns, Etobicoke West; Andrew Carricato, Sault Ste Marie; Elizabeth Clare, Cambridge; Mary Carl Guiao, Mississauga North; Jonathan Helmus, Durham East; Bradley Hickey, Huron; Brian Johnson, Kenora; Jeremy Karn, Elgin; Rebecca Lockridge, Frontenac-Addington; Erika Manata, Fort York; Maud Martinsen, Mississauga East; Anna Montemurro, Niagara Falls; Jeffrey Moran, Brampton North; Carolyn Murnaghan, Willowdale; Shanna O'Dwyer, Wellington; Sarah-Jane Renaud, Windsor-Walkerville; Omar Shariff, Don Mills; Charity Smith, Durham-York; Matthew Strang, Simcoe East; Stephen Vetsis, Scarborough East.

Would you welcome our new pages.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those people who worked tirelessly to put on Sudbury's fifth annual Cinefest. This film festival has become Canada's fourthlargest one, after Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. The economic impact to the region of Sudbury is \$2 million.

Despite this great success, a cloud continues to hang over the film industry in Ontario, pending further cuts to the Ontario Film Development Corp. Recently I was appalled to learn that the government has cut funding to this proven job-creator.

The government's own figures claim that for every dollar the Ontario film investment program spends, it supports \$8.30 in domestic television and film production in Ontario. More importantly, this program actually brings the province much-needed revenue.

The current slash-and-burn tactics of the government will soon damage an industry that generates over \$400 million per year in economic development and employs over 30,000 people.

Support for the film industry must not be seen as corporate welfare but as a necessary policy of economic development. This province can ill afford to lose production and jobs to competitors elsewhere.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I'd like to take this occasion to point out a trend that has been developing under this new government that is quite contrary to what they've been promising during the last election.

Specifically, you'll remember that Mr Harris and his candidates were out there in the last election telling people his biggest goal in life was to get the government out of people's faces. But a trend is developing that is quite disturbing and in fact is contrary to what Mr Harris promised during the last election. We've had a number of ministerial statements as of late that indicate that Mr Harris's government is in fact changing public policy that in the end will put government directly into people's lives. Let me explain by way of example.

If this government is removing government from people's lives, why then are suggestions being made to parents of welfare children to have the state, through the children's aid society, take over the responsibility of feeding these children? Not only do I find this repulsive as a suggestion, but it is also a new public policy. If it is, shame on you; shame on you all.

Another example of this contradiction: The Minister of Community and Social Services recently suggested to people how they should shop and what they should buy when they go to do their family groceries as a result of the Harris cuts to welfare. Mr Tsubouchi suggested that people buy dented cans of tuna. Mr Minister, telling people what you want them to buy when they go to the grocery store is not a power that you gained when you enter cabinet.

I say to you, if you're serious about getting government out of people's lives, you're being pretty darn selective about whose lives you want government out of.

NEPEAN'S BUDGET

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I'm very pleased to announce to this House that the city of Nepean has been recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for its excellence in governmental budgeting. This association presented Nepean with its distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

In accordance with the principles of The Common Sense Revolution, Nepean has balanced its budget this year and for the last 15 years has kept tax increases below the rate of inflation, all with virtually no debt.

Families in Nepean balance their budgets. The city of Nepean balances its budget year after year, and the people of Nepean have elected this government to ensure that Ontario does the same.

Balancing budgets and cutting taxes will secure hope, opportunity, prosperity and jobs for the people of this province. As elected representatives we should follow the lead set by our people in Nepean and families and communities across Ontario to commit ourselves to live within our means and genuinely change the way government works in this province.

1340

MINISTRY RELOCATION DÉMÉNAGEMENT D'UN MINISTÈRE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell): Le 8 juin dernier, les gens de Prescott et Russell m'ont accordé l'honneur d'être élu pour représenter leurs intérêts ici à Queen's Park. Je les remercie de m'avoir confié cette énorme responsabilité.

October 1995 was supposed to be a time of celebration in the city of Niagara Falls. After four years of preparation, the residents of Niagara Falls were looking forward to welcoming the Ministry of Tourism to their city. What better place for the Ministry of Tourism than the site of one of the seven wonders of the world, a site that boasts over 12 million visitors a year?

Unfortunately, the Premier and his new government rained on Niagara Falls' parade. Just one short month before the ministry was scheduled to move, the government announced that it had cancelled the relocation project. This relocation project had been in the works for over four years. A new \$23-million building had been built to house the ministry in Niagara Falls. Twenty families had already moved to Niagara Falls and had begun a new life there.

The residents of Niagara Falls are angry and upset over the cancellation. They were looking forward to the economic shot in the arm that the Ministry of Tourism would have provided to their city. Millions of dollars were spent by the city and business community in preparation for the move. Now the new building sits empty. It is no wonder Niagara Falls feels betrayed.

I urge the Premier and the Minister of Tourism to reverse their decision and allow the relocation of the Ministry of Tourism to Niagara Falls.

PROTECTION OF JOBS

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Yesterday's speech from the throne leaves me very disappointed. Where I expected there would be a plan to create jobs and to assist people and their communities who will be affected by the massive layoffs planned by the new Conservative government, there was none.

There was no mention of where these newly laid off people would find jobs, especially in an era where unemployment numbers are already very high.

I assume the plan is to let the private sector take over. Well, we already know how that works: more profits and fewer jobs, and the few jobs will be mostly part-time with no benefits.

In Sault Ste Marie, we already have a workplace on strike over just these issues. Local 582 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union represents the employees of Pino's IGA on Trunk Road in the Sault. This is a very profitable operation. These workers have been on strike since May of this year in an attempt to protect the few full-time positions that are left as well as trying to protect the rights of the part-time workers. This is a story we will hear repeated across the province as the new "commonsense" Ontario unfolds.

I stand today to say thank you to these workers, and I encourage the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store

workers at the IGA to continue their fight for their rights. I would also say to these workers, your fight is not only for yourselves, but for all of Ontario against the plan that will see more and more people forced into part-time work with lower wages and no benefits.

To Mike Harris I say: Thank you, Mike Harris. Thank you for nothing.

RAY HOLDEN

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I rise today to offer my congratulations to retiring chief of police Ray Holden of the Orangeville Police Services Board. Chief Holden holds the distinction of being the longest serving police chief in all of Ontario. I would like to personally thank him for the 40 years he has put into police work and add my congratulations to a long list of admirers for the hard work and dedication he has given the people of Ontario, to serve and protect.

Chief Holden began his police career in Thunder Bay, then known as Fort William and Port Arthur. He moved on to serve the communities of Marathon, Hagersville and Walkerton, finally moving to Orangeville in July 1975.

Chief Holden's respect in the community does not only come from serving as a very capable and hands-on chief of police for 28 years, but also as an active member of the Orangeville community, having been involved with the Lions Club of Orangeville as both member and president, and as a coach and fan of local sports clubs.

The province of Ontario owes Ray Holden a debt of gratitude. My wish for Ray and his wife, Sonia, is that their next 40 years are as rewarding as his past 40 have been.

Orangeville is lucky to have had the benefit of his wisdom and experience and will miss his friendly face behind the chief's desk.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South): I rise today because I am concerned that this government lacks a positive environmental agenda of any kind.

My party and the people of Ontario are interested in learning about what plans, if any, this government has regarding the environment.

What will this government do concerning global warming or the protection of our green space? What will it do about water pollution and air quality? What measures will it take to clean up contaminated soil or protect our forestry resources? What will the Mike Harris government do to preserve our farm land for agriculture and our wildlife habitat?

It is with grave concern that I report to you, Mr Speaker, that neither The Common Sense Revolution nor yesterday's throne speech shed any light on these questions. In fact, there is not a single reference to the need to protect, preserve and enhance our natural environment found within the government's agenda as outlined in these two documents.

We all recognize that a healthy environment is essential to the wellbeing of individuals and communities, and crucial for sound economic growth.

Government has a vital role to play in developing

policies and in setting and enforcing standards for the protection of human health and the environment. The people of Ontario have come to expect this from their governments.

What they want to know now is whether the Mike Harris government will protect our natural environment and, better still, whether it will leave our environment in a state better than the one in which they found it.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): In the throne speech the provincial government indicated that it intended to implement a demanding core curriculum for education.

One of those new courses that is required is Snobelen as a second language; that is, "language" as a noun.

Curriculum experts in the ministry and in boards across the province are working with teachers as we speak—or should we say, "as we language"?—to develop this new course. One of the most difficult parts of this course will be the new vocabulary, that is, definitions—nouns like "client," "consumer," "service provider" and even "crisis." Especially confusing for the student will be the use and meaning of verbs like "invent" and "language."

Certain nouns, like "student," "parent," "taxpayer," "teacher" and, particularly, "reveal" will become obsolete as people become more familiar with language Snobelen.

Only when we truly grasp this language will we understand what the Minister of Education and Training actually means when he says he must invent a crisis in education. We will realize that he did not really mean what we all thought he said. Perhaps we will recognize that he almost never means what he says except perhaps when he talks about business people dodging taxes.

Throughout the process, we'll all understand that nouns like "credibility" are not part of language Snobelen. They can dispense with that word from now on.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): In recent weeks our government, under the leadership of the Premier and the Finance minister, has begun the course of returning Ontario to sound fiscal health.

We've begun the downsizing of government, the dismantling of unnecessary regulation and the balancing of a provincial budget which had bloated to over \$57 billion.

It should concern all the taxpayers in this province that over the past few weeks certain municipal politicians and the boards of a number of municipal agencies have failed to understand that the citizens of Ontario are overtaxed and overregulated, and want change.

When the TTC cannot even manage a 1% reduction in its operating grant and instead chooses to inflict a fare increase on its customers and, even worse, cause inconvenience and suffering to its Wheel-Trans clients, it's clear that all of our partners do not share our respect for the wishes of the electorate.

What is needed now is a genuine commitment from all levels of government to follow the example we're setting and redesign their operations to strive for efficiency, to demand productivity and creativity from their employees,

to look at new and innovative means of service delivery and, more than anything else, to heed the clarion call of the voters and do all these things with fewer tax dollars.

We call upon municipal and federal politicians to resist the urge to criticize our actions and instead to join us in making government more efficient and earning the respect of the long-suffering taxpayers.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

BICYCLING SAFETY

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I am happy to announce that the regulations for Bill 124, the bicycle helmet legislation, are complete.

The law will apply to cyclists under the age of 18. We want to protect our children and young people from cycling-related head injuries, and cyclists who are in the habit of wearing approved helmets as kids will be more likely to use them as adults. We have also noted that most other jurisdictions that have introduced bicycle helmet legislation have done so to protect the minors.

I certainly encourage Ontario cyclists of all ages to wear helmets. However, adults can make a responsible safety choice for themselves.

Wearing a helmet is important. Each year, some 12 people under 18 years are killed in cycling mishaps in Ontario and some 1,500 are injured. Seventy five per cent of cycling deaths result from head injuries, injuries that helmet use can reduce by 85%.

This new law goes a long way towards preparing young people for many enjoyable and safe years on their bikes.

SPENDING REDUCTIONS

Hon Dave Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Today I'm reporting back on the July 21 spending reductions announced by my colleague the Minister of Finance. In his statement, Minister Eves outlined a number of major cost-cutting initiatives necessary because of the fiscal mess we inherited after the election on June 8. Mr Eves announced we would cut \$1.9 billion from this year's spending plans.

The real issue behind these reductions is simply this: Can we continue to spend beyond our means today and expect future taxpayers to pay for the services we use today? How will we be judged five, 10 or 20 years from now by Ontario residents who must not only pay for their own health care, education and social services but will also pay for the debt we pile on today?

Government spending has doubled over the past 10 years and our debt has almost tripled, to a total of nearly \$100 billion. When we took office in June, we found the real deficit was \$10.6 billion. Clearly, this is not sustainable.

This year alone, the province will spend nearly \$9 billion on interest costs. This means the equivalent of almost \$800 coming out of the pocket of each and every person in Ontario to pay interest on past government deficits. If debt costs were to continue to grow at the rate they have since 1990, they would cost every Ontarian

about \$1,700 each year by the end of the decade.

Our mandate is clear. Ontario residents expect this government to take the action necessary to a balanced budget and ensure that necessary services will be available and affordable—not only today but in future years as well. And most importantly, balanced books will restore confidence in Ontario and will bring a willingness to invest and to create jobs.

On July 21, the Minister of Finance announced \$850 million of operating expenditure reductions and \$307 million of capital reductions. He also assigned ministries targets for cutting their spending by a total of \$500 million in operating costs and \$187 million in capital costs and asked them to return to Management Board on September 1 with their plans to meet these targets.

Today I am announcing that the ministries have met the reduction targets for operating and capital spending and that these savings will continue next year. In fact, the savings total \$771.9 million, thereby exceeding the target of \$687 million set by the Minister of Finance by nearly \$85 million.

These cuts will mean that we are eliminating almost 1,400 positions from the civil service over the next two years.

The savings I am announcing today will result in some cuts to services, and over the coming days my cabinet colleagues will be communicating with their stakeholders to discuss exactly how today's cuts will affect their programs.

I would note, however, that while the direct operating expenditures—the money the government spends to run itself—account for only 10% of total expenditures, this year they represent fully 28% of the operating savings I am announcing today.

These are tough decisions. However, these measures are a necessary step to achieve our goal of renewed prosperity, reduced taxes, a balanced budget and more jobs.

Cutting government spending is crucial to future economic and employment growth in Ontario. Less than a month after being elected, we moved to get the province's spending under control by reducing expenditures for this year. Today's announcement shows that we are doing just that.

But we can't just tinker or cope. We must rethink how we use taxpayers' dollars to deliver public services. And just as we are rethinking the way we do business, provincially funded organizations must take a hard look at how they operate, at the kinds of services they provide and at the way they are providing them.

We will now be working with our ministries and with the organizations we fund to find and implement ways to bring permanent change to the public sector: to make government smaller and more efficient and to bring quality services to Ontarians who really need them. For this to happen, we must be certain we are spending every dollar we have as wisely as possible.

After all, we will all benefit most from a province which wisely manages its finances and provides services where they are truly needed.

BICYCLING SAFETY

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): When I was told there was a ministerial statement today, I thought the minister was going to recognize the thousands of people who are left without rides to work and to hospitals by Wheels-Trans in Metro Toronto, that possibly he would have seen the light to help those people who need that Wheel-Trans ride, but obviously that's going to be delayed—until when, I don't know.

But his statement today is maybe the most classic case of backpedalling we've ever seen so far—anyway, in this government. For the last month there's been an eerie silence anticipating the October 1 implementation of the helmet law. We have seen why there's been a silence, because in essence they've caved in to ideological pressure and have restricted the use of helmets just to people under the age of 18. Basically, what they have done is they've said some people in society are more disposable than others.

1400

In fact, being new here, I suspect this is a complete contradiction of Bill 124. Bill 124 says that no persons shall be exempt, so who is a person and who isn't? This law is really half a law. It's a cave-in, it's a flip-flop, especially when the Premier of the province, on August 9, was asked specifically, "Would you enforce the helmet law as proposed by the member for London North?" and he said—

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): What did he say?

Mr Colle: I'll put my glasses on. "That was the will of the people, it was passed by the Legislature, and we'll honour that,' he said."

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): What's the date on that?

Mr Colle: August 9.

"The bill itself will not be changed."

There's been a dramatic change of this bill. It is not the intent of it, and I think it will result in a number of people in Ontario suffering accidents as a result of this caving in to these ideological pressures. It's got nothing to do with safety. so safety has been given a back seat to ideology. If this is the way the Minister of Transportation is going to begin his ministry, I can imagine what we have in store.

SPENDING REDUCTIONS

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I think the minister has a case of bad speechwriting over there. I think he needs to hire another speechwriter, because the statement essentially says nothing. The Minister of Finance made his statement some time ago, and the minister for Management Board stands up and says, "I'm going to cheerlead him today and tell you how wonderful all these cuts are going to be for the province of Ontario."

Minister, let me ask you something. When you're sitting in that cabinet room having your ideological feeding frenzy, trying to figure out whose young you're going to devour next, do you ever think about the impact these cuts will really have on Ontario? Really, do you

think about the devastating economic impact?

Sure, we agree with making government more efficient, we agree with streamlining, we agree with the kinds of efficiencies and cost savings that have to come in the future, but you haven't told us what the impact of these cuts will be on the people of the province of Ontario. There is nothing laid before this House, no details to specify those cuts. There is no budget, which we understand is forthcoming, but that's not good enough. People are beginning to suffer out there. This Parliament has a right to know what in fact is being cut, the kinds of devastating impacts that will be felt in each of those sectors and the kinds of impacts that will be felt by people out there. We saw yesterday an example of the kind of anger that will be demonstrated in this province because of the cuts you're bringing about.

Yes, you were elected, yes, you have a majority, but you need to be aware—we'll make you aware—of the real suffering and sacrifice that will ensue as a result of your harebrained cuts, which are going to cut right across the spectrum without any due regard for the kind of suffering that will take place. You need to measure the impacts of these cuts, and if you had any courage, you would bring some details before this House for us to examine and to start a real debate in this House, which I think everyone's waiting to have. Let's bring on that debate. Bring on those details. That's what we're waiting for.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): The statement by the Chair of Management Board today obviously begs the question, where's the beef? You've made a statement today that gives us very little by way of detail. On one hand, you've been telling us all the way through the election and then on July 21 that this massive hit of 13,000 jobs is coming. Yesterday we heard that you were going to cut \$9 billion out of the provincial budget, and today we're talking about less than \$1 billion and 1,400 positions.

We know more is coming. The people of Ontario out there are anxious and nervous about this, particularly those whose jobs depend on it. A community like Sault Ste Marie, that depends so highly on the services this government provides, is wondering what to do in face of what it is expecting.

It is, in my mind, short of being truthful and forthright with people, not to give us the details and talk with us about what it is that you're going to do in a forthright, honest fashion, so that places like Hamilton and Niagara Falls, which have been working for the last five years putting together community economic development plans that contain the impact and effect and contribution that jobs the provincial government provides to those communities will have—and here we're going to take away a lot of that. There's no information here that will help us as we try to come to terms with all of that and provide the employment we have to provide to our citizens. I ask you for more detail, Chair of Management Board, so we can respond to this statement today.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): In responding to the statement made by the Chairman of Management Board, I think the government, in making the statements it is

making with respect to its cuts, ought in every statement to at least give us the honour of telling the whole story with respect to why the cuts are as severe and as harsh as they are. The reason is because of the promise you have made with respect to cuts in income taxes, which cuts will benefit most substantially the people who have the most money. This is the escalator, this is the treadmill that you have put the people of this province on.

There is a general acceptance in this House and across the province with respect to the need to restrain spending and the need to keep deficits under control. You'll have no argument with anybody about that issue. Where we part company, and we part company most firmly, with members of the Conservative Party is that additional cuts in health care, in social services, in Wheel-Trans, in education, services for the most vulnerable, services that we were promised during the election would not be cut, are being cut and are being effected today because of the promises you made with respect to income tax and because you're so determined to give a handout to the rich.

If we're facing such a serious problem with respect to the deficit, if that's the problem we're facing, if that's the difficulty we're facing, if that's the challenge we're facing with respect to the deficit, I would say to the member for York East, and I would say to him very directly, and to the Premier as well, that everybody in this House knows that the pace and the force that are being directed to these cuts have everything to do with your promises on income tax cuts which will go principally to the wealthy and have nothing at all to do with the fact that we're all agreed on the need to control spending and the need to deal with deficits. There is consensus on that. We don't need your ritualistic expressions of financial piety to tell us what to do.

We paid the price for two and a half years in this caucus, knowing full well what had to be done. We paid the political price for that, and now I'm telling you, sir, come clean and remind people that it's because of the absurdity of your giveaways to middle- and upper-income people that the province, the entire province, the health care, the education and the services, are being put at risk because of your financial voodoo. That's what's happening.

BICYCLING SAFETY

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): I too listened intently to what amounts to, on this first session, nothing short of betrayal. I'm trying to place myself in the shoes of one Dianne Cunningham, for I recall vividly her lobby, timid at first and yet more aggressive as the days went on, "Gilles, give us bike helmets," and we did acquiesce. Today Dianne Cunningham has been betrayed and betrayed again.

ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

1410

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I think it would be a surprise if we didn't have some response from you and some discussion of where we're going in terms of a comment on what happened here yesterday at the Ontario Legislature. We had a bit of a discussion this morning among the three House leaders, and I want to say that anything I might say does not indicate any prejudgments that have

been made about what happened yesterday and how it came about. But I have a great concern that in the last couple of months there have been changes in the way that the security operations in this building are operating.

It has always been my understanding that members of the Legislature, obviously with the Speaker providing the leadership, are the ones who make decisions around this place about security. Decisions were made yesterday that, I believe very sincerely, contributed to the very serious situation that was experienced around the Legislature and in the Legislature.

I think it's clear that there will continue to be security challenges around this place and that all of us, as members from all three political parties, have an obligation and have a right to be part of those discussions so that we're all setting the security policy around the Legislature.

I want to suggest, Mr Speaker, that in developing that security policy, the best way for that to happen would be to make a referral from this place to the Legislative Assembly committee to review what happened yesterday, to review what's happened in the last couple of months and then to make recommendations to you about what changes need to take place with respect to security.

I can't emphasize enough the concerns that my caucus has, and I think all of us in all three political parties, about what happened yesterday: members being locked out; others being locked out of the facility; people being injured out front; decisions that were made, with my understanding being that no elected member was part of the decision about who could have access to the front steps, who could use the PA system. I sincerely believe that if that normal access had been provided, that actually would have helped prevent the mayhem that occurred out in front of this place. What happened yesterday does not serve the province well; it does not serve the institution of Parliament well.

Mr Speaker, I think we need a report from you as quickly as possible, but even more, I believe we should agree today that there will be, over the next couple of days, an all-party resolution passed in Parliament making a referral to the Legislative Assembly committee so that what happened yesterday never happens again around this place.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Mr Speaker, there may be members who have comments other than mine on this, but it was certainly a matter of great concern at the House leaders' meeting this morning. I thought there was a fair consensus that what was most important was to have the input of the three parties rather than having the government impose on the opposition, the opposition on the government or the Speaker alone, that we should have that kind of input, because the vision that people had of the province yesterday was not a pretty one on the front steps, needless to say.

It's a very difficult job to be a security person in a time when there are people who have very strong feelings about what's happening in the province. I appreciate the fact that the people who are on the front line often have to make instant decisions when they're dealing with situations that arise in and around the building.

I was deeply disappointed that members of the Legislative Assembly were denied access to the building. Something very fundamental to this House is the access that all of us have as elected members to this chamber and to the building as a whole, and the building is open 24 hours a day for that very purpose.

The image that we saw at the front, again, is one that will be shown across North America, unfortunately. It was what you call in the business, probably, good TV. In other words, it is something that is interesting, I suppose, because it's different; it's out of the ordinary. As a result we look at newscasts even beyond our own borders and see that this was a featured item. That's what I think gets concern in the minds of the members of the Legislature.

There have been some additional restrictions placed on us as members coming in in certain parts of the building, and I understand—again, it's no one trying to be mean; it's no one trying to deliberately obstruct the opposition in this case; in my view it's simply a case of caution—the Sergeant at Arms convened a committee some time ago that discussed some aspects of security in this House. I think it would be beneficial to get some input from the deliberations of that committee.

Ultimately, I understand you are responsible for the precinct which is known as the House and the parliamentary building, but I think we want to try as much as we can to avoid what we saw yesterday with people being injured, with a melee taking place on the front steps of the Legislature and around the building.

On the other hand, I appreciate very much that it's important to have adequate security in this building. If something had happened in the other direction, if there had been people who had had access to the House and perhaps wanted to take things to the extreme, I understand that there's going to be a caution about that as well.

I think what we want is a balance. I think a legislative committee can be very helpful in that regard, of members who have had some experience and some observations on this. Your input will be valuable. The input of staff and perhaps the input of some of the officials of the Ministry of the Solicitor General would be helpful because they had people who were here acting as well.

So all of this I think will be very helpful, and I would certainly be supportive of that and I would hope the government would respond favourably to this because I know they are as concerned about the matter as we are.

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I think that somewhere along the line the climate in this institution has changed, and it's changed quite dramatically.

Yesterday was unfortunate, and I think all of us realize that, but today there is a situation that sent chills up my spine. As we speak, there are at least five OPP vans parked in the courtyard outside the west wing loaded with guard dogs. When you see that, someone had to give that order; someone had to anticipate that there was going to be a problem. I would suggest, with respect, that sometimes the anticipation and the preparation creates the problem. I think that whoever it was who gave that order—and as I say, when I went out to my car this

morning and saw all these vans and heard the dogs yapping, it really was a chilling experience.

I think it is important that the security and the safety of everybody in this precinct be taken into consideration, but I think it's important that we look at what the response is, and does the response match the danger? I would suggest to you that there has been an over-response.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I don't wish to belabour the point, but I do want to add a couple of observations about my own experiences yesterday which have specifically to do with the denial of entry for members of this assembly.

I indicated to the House at the end of proceedings yesterday that I, my colleague from Sudbury and, for a while, the minister without portfolio, the member for Burlington South, were systematically denied entry to this building by people who knew us to be duly elected members of the Legislature.

I should say, and I want to say publicly and thankfully, that there were staff in the suite of the Lieutenant Governor who, when I approached them up those carpeted steps in the northwest part of the building, said: "Oh, Mr Conway, good to see you. Of course you might enter." So I want to thank them for their generosity of spirit.

But let me say very seriously that there is no more fundamental matter of parliamentary privilege than the right of duly elected members of this Parliament, or any other Parliament, to access this chamber and obviously this building, and that has to be understood by all of us. Can you imagine, for example, a government about to face a very critical vote where it knows by virtue of an electoral result it has the members to carry the vote, and where the fate of the government lies in the balance and in fact the government itself might be defeated because someone decided that members of Parliament associated with the government were barred at the door and denied access? It's just absolutely unthinkable that there could be such a policy.

I have over the last few moments been reading the 21st edition of Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice, and he makes very plain, in his deliberations around the question of parliamentary privilege, that the right of access is fundamental and it's medieval in its origins.

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I don't want to—and I asked you, Mr Speaker, and I'm sure you will—inquire as to why that denial of access was allowed, or why those of us, myself and the member for Sudbury and the member for Burlington South, were told that we could not come into this building. As I say, one of the most frustrating parts of my efforts yesterday was in the back of the building, some of the basement entrances, looking at people I've worked with here for 15 or 20 years, who know me to be a member—and there wasn't very much of a crowd around—and security guards just waving, saying, "Sorry, you can't come in here today," or, "You can't come here now." That is, I repeat, one of the most fundamental breaches of parliamentary privilege that I can imagine.

I want to know, Mr Speaker, in your report who gave

the order. Who was it who instructed good security people—and I know them to be good people—who gave the order that members duly elected on June 8 could not come here yesterday to hear Her Majesty's representative read the throne speech? Clearly, they did not act without instruction. Who gave the order and what are we going to do to make people who give orders like that understand that parliamentary privilege means something?

I agree with the members who've spoken before, and I was outside with some others of the precinct. I see my friend Mr Walkom from the Toronto Star. He and I happened to be at one door together, equally rejected.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): It's the company you keep, Sean.

Mr Conway: As the member for Rainy River says, it's perhaps the company I keep.

But I want to say it is a very important company we keep, because our electors have sent us here to represent their views and their concerns.

So, Mr Speaker, I say, again, a more fundamental breach of parliamentary privilege I cannot imagine. I want to know, and as soon as possible, who gave the order to deny us access and what steps are being taken to educate a few people around here as to what Parliament's all about and, more importantly, assurances that this kind of policy and practice is never going to recur.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, if I might, on behalf of the government, both the member for St Catharines and the member for Windsor-Riverside have quite properly stated that we had this discussion in House leaders this morning. As a matter of fact, I was able to contact you, as you know, by phone just before 1:30 this afternoon to tell you that it was our intention that we do refer this matter to the Legislative Assembly committee. I apologize to the two other House leaders that I did not get back to you, but it did happen right at 1:30 today.

I think that this matter should be referred to the Legislative Assembly committee to provide some advice to yourself. I understand that under both statute and the standing orders you are charged with the responsibility of security in the legislative precinct, and I understand that there is a very difficult balance that has to be struck on some occasions between security and the rights of members and also, I might point out, just as importantly if not more importantly, the rights of the public to access to the Legislative Assembly building.

So I would, from our side, certainly indicate to all members and to you, Mr Speaker, and the public as well, that we certainly have no problem with referring the matter of security in the legislative precinct to the Legislative Assembly committee as advice to yourself in your duties as the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I want to thank those honourable members raising the issue that they have. It's a very major concern of mine and I want to say that I hope I have the review or the report that I'm looking for before it's referred to that committee. I'm looking forward to having that next week.

ONTARIO APPLES

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, with responsibility for Francophone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like all members to be aware that the fresh Ontario apples on all members' desks today are compliments of the Ontario apple growers through the Ontario Apple Marketing Commission.

As all members know, we are just into the apple season in this province, and these top-quality apples will be enjoyed by people throughout this province and indeed across the world. The apple crop in Ontario is almost two thirds of our fruit crop, and it is good news that today it reminds us that good things do grow on Ontario farms.

ORAL QUESTIONS HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is to the Premier. In The Common Sense Revolution you state and state clearly, "We will not cut health care." In a campaign backgrounder you stated: "There will be no cuts to health care funding by a Harris government. This is our first and most important commitment." Those are your words, Premier. You repeated them over and over again during the campaign last spring, yet less than a month after being sworn in, you reneged on that commitment by cutting \$132 million from the budget of the Ministry of Health. I notice that this commitment, your first and most important, was not actually important enough to make it into your first throne speech.

Premier, you have broken your promise, the promise that you called your first and most important commitment—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Let's have an election.

Mrs McLeod: —I ask you, how can you justify breaking a promise that was so central to your campaign? If that commitment was so important to you, Premier—laugh as you may about promises which you may have made—if that promise was so important to you, how could you allow it to be one of the first promises you broke?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Mr Speaker, let me too, in my first opportunity, congratulate you. Obviously, it's going to be a very difficult challenge in administering the affairs of the Legislature faced yesterday, and of course administering us is a big enough challenge at all, 130 members, and I offer my congratulations.

Mr Cooke: And then you are going to get rid of the seats.

Hon Mr Harris: I offer as well my congratulations to the leader of the official opposition on her personal reelection and on her position in this chamber. The member for Windsor-Riverside interjected. I think he's ready for an election. I don't know if he has consulted with the leader of his party on that, but let me get directly to the leader of the official opposition.

We made a commitment on May 3, 1994, to the people of this province to protect the \$17.4-billion health care budget. That was in The Common Sense Revolution

when we launched it. We said, and Ontarians had told us through our consultations, that the number one funding priority was indeed health care. On May 3, a year later, in London, 1995, we reiterated that commitment, and I quote from the announcement during the campaign: "Protected health care funding, coupled with smarter management and reinvested savings, will make Ontario's health care system once again the best in the world."

We have sealed the envelope, but we have said time and time and time again in The Common Sense Revolution, in the campaign, that we have to spend smarter, that we have to find savings if we're going to meet the new funding pressures, some announcements that the Minister of Health has already made today. I can tell the honourable member and I can tell all honourable members that four or five years from now, when we head back to the polls, that envelope will have been sealed and it will be a tremendous challenge for us to maintain health care funding at \$17.4 billion. We see our commitment as, can we keep it there, as opposed to cutting the health care envelope. That was our commitment in The Common Sense Revolution, it was our commitment in the campaign and it is our commitment today.

Mrs McLeod: Every time we raise the issue of a fundamental broken promise, \$132 million cut from the budget of the Ministry of Health in this government's very first financial statement, the Premier talks about reallocating the resources. In fact, the Finance minister that very day said, "We've cut it but we're going to reallocate it."

1430

There's a basic fact about budgeting, I say to the Premier and the Finance minister: You cannot reallocate that money and still use it to cut the deficit. The Finance minister presented a financial statement where he cut \$132 million from the Ministry of Health budget and he used it to reduce his deficit. It was off the bottom line. You cannot tell me that you're going to reallocate that same money to other parts of the health care budget and still use it to cut the deficit. You can't have it both ways. Why don't you stop today—stop—playing games with the electorate and stop trying to pretend that a cut is not a cut?

Hon Mr Harris: Unlike the former governments over the last 10 years, we are not going to go ahead and spend money, make new spending commitments and then say, "Oh, maybe we can find the savings later"; "Oh, maybe we'll just borrow the money for now"; "Oh, we'll hike taxes." That's been the record of the last 10 years. If we are going to be able to reinvest savings to stay anywhere close to the \$17.4-billion budget, we are going to have to find savings in some areas for reinvestment in others.

Now, already the Minister of Health has made announcements of reinvestment in the area of \$25 million—reinvested, new spending this year, this budget—into dialysis. Expanded ambulance services into London have already been announced. The difference between us and the former government is we are going to find the savings first, unlike the Liberals, unlike the New Democrats, before we reinvest the savings. That, we believe, is responsible.

Mrs McLeod: Surely this Premier, on the first question of the first day, is not already going to start talking about previous governments. Surely he is ready, on this first day in the first question, to accept the responsibility to speak to the commitments he made and which he is now responsible for as he assumes the government of this province.

We know those commitments and I say to the Premier, it is simply not good enough, on this first and most important commitment you made to the people of this province, to say that at the end of five years the health care budget is going to be \$17.4 billion, because we are concerned and people in this province are concerned about the cuts in health care today.

The promise was, I say to the Minister of Health and to the Premier, not to cut health care funding, period, full stop. We have already had one financial statement from this government. Already there's been a cut to the budget. Now hospitals are threatened with huge cuts, and that would mean a loss of health care now, a cut to health care now.

Premier, if the cut in July was not really a cut, I am going to assume that the \$132 million will be back in the Health budget in the next financial statement, and I ask you today to assure me and the people in this Legislature and the people in this province that the Ministry of Health budget will be \$17.4 billion in the next financial statement, in your first budget, in the budget after that and in every budget after that.

Will you ensure that hospitals will be exempt from cuts so that the communities across this province will not lose their health care? Will you guarantee that the Ministry of Health care budget will stand at \$17.4 billion today, tomorrow and every day after that until the next election? Because that was your promise.

Hon Mr Harris: The leader of the official opposition, I tell you that this new government needs no lesson in breaking promises from the record of the Liberal Party when they've been in government; promise after promise after promise after promise after promise, if you want me to read out the list of the broken promises.

The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition committed, I believe, in her election campaign to stable funding. I believe she indicated that meant no increase, no decrease: stable funding. We called it a sealed envelope. The leader of the third party, the government of the day, I think indicated stable funding. In fact they were proud to have been the only government to have cut health care spending in real-dollar terms, and they did.

We committed to the \$17.4-billion envelope for health care. What we are saying is that rather than have new funding that's going to be there—and in the throne speech we talked about cardiac care, cancer care, public health vaccination programs for school children—we want to find the savings first or at the same time, not the other way around, because the experience of the last 10 years has been, "Fund this and we'll find the savings later," and the savings never came.

That's why we're \$10 billion in deficit five years in a row, that's why the interest costs have gone up \$5 billion,

chewing into our health care programs, chewing into our programs for the most needy. We are determined to stop this cycle. We are determined to be responsible in how we meet our commitments, something the leader of the official opposition did not do when she was in government.

Mrs McLeod: I would just note clearly that making the savings first means cuts to health care now. That stands as a broken promise which this Premier has not addressed.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): But I will turn to the second question, which is also to the Premier. Premier, as you are well aware and people across this province are aware, some 938,000 people across the province will see a 21.6% cut in their welfare benefits this weekend.

You and your Minister of Community and Social Services have said that people can make up the difference if they just go out and get a job by the weekend; they've had enough time. Premier, the reality is that there are 515,000 unemployed people in the province of Ontario. They have been looking for jobs. Some of them have been looking for jobs for years and they cannot find work. Now you're suggesting that people who are on welfare simply go out and find themselves a job.

My question is a very straightforward one, Premier: Where are those jobs? How do you expect people on welfare to go out and find jobs when there are no jobs out there?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Let me say this to the honourable member. We are dealing now with an area of the greatest concern to this government. We're dealing with 500,000 people who are unemployed. We are dealing with those who have lost hope, who have been trapped and caught in this cycle of dependency on welfare.

I want to say this to the member; I want to say it to all members: This government takes no comfort, no joy in having to cut back billions of dollars that we don't have, none whatsoever. I want the people at home, the job creators, those in communities, the neighbours of people who are down on their luck to know that we take no comfort in that.

But the fact of the matter is this: We have tried throwing more money into a system that is not working, that has failed. Ten years ago the average payment for those on welfare was about 10% above the rest of Canada, about right for Ontario's cost of living. In the last 10 years we've seen welfare rates go up to 30%, 40% in excess of the rate of inflation and the problems have got worse: more people on welfare, three times more today than 10 years ago when my party last governed this province. This is a sad state of affairs.

I want to say this through you, Mr Speaker, to the honourable member, to all honourable members: We are committed to breaking this cycle of dependency. We are committed to having a system that is fair, that provides enough money to help people on a temporary basis but is not a lifetime dependence, and we're only going to do

this if we have the cooperation of all members of society, of all members of the House, of all employers, profit and non-profit. We are appealing to them to help people with jobs, full-time and part-time, in this province.

Mrs McLeod: My question to the Premier clearly was about jobs. Where are the jobs for people who want to work? Where are the jobs for the people who you say you want to get to work?

This Premier comes in today and talks of concern about people who have lost hope. These are the very people whom he and his minister have addressed for the last weeks by telling them that they can solve their problems, deal with their concerns by going out buying cans of dented spaghetti or buying tuna in bulk. The Premier said yesterday, "Well, if you're struggling a bit, just get your family and your friends to help." And then they say: "You've had lots of time to get a job. Just go out there and get a job if you really want to make your situation better." That's why the question today, Premier, is, where are the jobs?

There is a reality that in August there were 4,000 fewer people working in this province than there were in July. There is a reality that this government's initiatives for the first three months have jeopardized about 80,000 jobs. The way things are going, there are going to be more people unemployed, not more people working in the province of Ontario under this government.

1440

Premier, I say to you again that jobs aren't there. How can you and your minister just blithely tell people on welfare to go out and get a job by this weekend when hundreds of thousands of people in this province have been unemployed for long periods of time and are likely to be unemployed for even longer periods of time?

Hon Mr Harris: Let me deal with your suggestion. There's no question that there are not enough jobs in Ontario, but why is this? We have among the highest tax rates in North America. We have labour legislation that the job creators say: "We're not coming to Ontario. Thank you, but no thank you. You've put up the barriers. We will go to other provinces. We will go to other states."

It is exactly because of the free-spending record of the past 10 years, of the legislative barriers, of the regulatory barriers, things like Bill 40 labour legislation, things like red-tape rules. This is what we campaigned on. This is what we said in the throne speech. We must create more jobs. We are confident that we will have more jobs. In fact—

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Where are the jobs?

Hon Mr Harris: Well, you ask where they are. There are 89,000 more private sector jobs in the economy today than there were nine months ago. Are there enough to go around? No. Why aren't there enough to go around? Because of the mismanagement, the overspending, the deficits, the barriers that have been erected in the last 10 years.

I would like to say to all those looking for a job that in one day or in 90 days or in one year—we can undo the damage of 10 years, but we cannot do it that fast. But

we will do it absolutely as fast as we can to create jobs in this province.

Mrs McLeod: It's not a question of whether the Premier would like to say it. He did say it. He said very clearly, people who are on welfare have had enough time since they knew their welfare payments were going to be cut to go out and get a job. His minister said there's still time—two days left—to get a job by this weekend.

The Premier, I take from his last answer, has at least acknowledged that the jobs are not there. So I take the Premier back to another commitment he made during the election campaign, a commitment which he has talked about again in refusing to answer the question about where the jobs are, and that is his commitment to bring in a plan to get those people off welfare and back into the workplace.

You talked about it during the campaign. You mentioned it in yesterday's throne speech. You call it workfare, but nobody knows what you mean. Nobody knows what your plan is, and there is certainly a lot of confusion between you and your minister as to exactly what you mean.

So, Premier, I give you that opportunity today. How do you define "workfare," and tell us what jobs will actually be there for people. When will those jobs be there, and perhaps most importantly, will they all be paying jobs?

Hon Mr Harris: Right now, we inherited a situation where we're paying a significant number of people, over a million, by the way, of families, 300,000 to 400,000, to sit home and do nothing. That's the legacy that we have right now.

It is our goal, through workfare, if the member is asking about that, as quickly as we can to find programs where we can pay people to do something. Workfare, educationfare, trainingfare: These were the commitments that we've made over the last year. These were the commitments that the member made in the campaign. I remember the red book very well. In the red book the member committed that she was going to implement workfare.

This is breaking new ground. This is not easy. This is something that is a different philosophy. There is a philosophy, create a cycle of dependency, pay people more money to stay home and do nothing versus give people an opportunity, give them training, give them work experience, give them jobs.

This is what you committed to in your red book. If you have ideas, share them with us. We clearly say we're looking—

Mrs McLeod: You're looking for help? It is only the first day.

Hon Mr Harris: Of course. We accept help from everybody.

There is no question about this: There will not be 725,000 new jobs in the province tomorrow—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would the Premier wrap up his answer, please.

Hon Mr Harris: —but there will be five years from now, after we reduce the barriers: scrap Bill 40, reduce

the regulation, get our tax climate under control, send out the signal to the private sector job creators that, unlike the last 10 years, we're open for business. That's what we plan to do.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I would like to ask a question to the Premier. I would like to take the Premier back to the date in May when he took the pledge. He said, and I'm quoting—at least the remarks are in quotes—"If I don't live up to anything that I have promised to do and committed to do, I will resign." I wonder if the Premier still stands by those words.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Let me congratulate the member on his re-election. It's not easy these days in 130—or, in the future, 99 or so—ridings, to be re-elected. I also understand exactly the seat from which he is speaking and asking the question, realizing that it is not first-choice, but it is the first day and the first opportunity for us in these seats in the Legislature.

Clearly, I think one of the things that was clear in the lead-up to the campaign and in the last election campaign was a sense of frustration among the voters that politicians would say one thing at election time and do another after. I guess this has been built up by broken promises, lack of commitments and changes of direction that were there. Clearly we wanted, and continue to—and yesterday sent out a very strong signal that we had commitments that we made in the campaign, both on the tax sense, on a budgetary sense, on legislation that we would deal with, and it is my intention, to the best of my ability, to live up to those commitments.

Mr Rae: I can't honestly tell whether, in answer to a short question, that was a yes or a no. But perhaps I could help the Premier and ask him to turn, if he would, to his copy of The Common Sense Revolution, which I'm sure he has with him since it's been available—1-800-96 blah, blah, blah. The number is now Cuts Are Us.

But at the bottom of page 6 of The Common Sense Revolution, my copy, which is the fifth edition, the fifth printing, post-Martin budget, it says in the description on the subject of whether or not there would be user fees for health services, in bold print at the bottom, "Under this plan, there will be"—and then there's a large capitalized word—"NO new user fees." That's the commitment.

I was surprised to hear the Premier on the news the other night, in musing on the subject of charging seniors for drugs, saying, in his words, that there are no sacred cows and that in fact the government is considering changes to the Ontario drug plan which would require senior citizens to pay a user fee for drugs.

The Premier received a lot of votes from seniors. I wonder how he feels now about the pledge that's contained at the bottom of page 6 on user fees.

Hon Mr Harris: I have page 6. Very clearly, we're referring to the fair share health care levy; that's the category. We talk at the bottom:

"We believe the new fair share health care levy, based on the ability to pay, meets the test of fairness and the requirements of the Canada Health Act while protecting the fundamental integrity of our health care system. "Under this plan"—the fair share health care plan and the Canada Health Act—"there will be NO new user fees." And we stand behind that. The Canada Health Act is very specific that medically necessary services are to be delivered without additional charges or copayments.

This government plans, unlike the former government, to live up to the Canada Health Act and to respect the requirements of the Canada Health Act. This is why we restored out-of-province coverage, not just for seniors but for all those covered, because the Canada Health Act specifically required it. This was a violation of the Canada Health Act by the previous government, and we indicated that we would respect it. We respect it with the fair share health care levy, we respect it in the context of the Canada Health Act. When it comes to medically necessary services, those defined in the Canada Health Act—let me also quote from the CSR: "Under this plan, there will NO new user fees."

Mr Rae: I think we've heard more weasel words in the last five minutes than we heard during the entire two years from the leader of the third party, as he then was, and as the Premier, as he now is. There was no mention during the election campaign, in any of the meetings I had with seniors, the debates we had, there was no discussion, there was no admission that the drug plan was on the table. He went in to every talk show host in the province and said during the election campaign: "I'm different from everybody else. I'm a new kind of politician. I make a promise and I keep it." He spent five minutes in this House, the Premier did, waffling in and out on whether or not a promise was a promise or a commitment was a commitment.

So I have a very simple question for the Premier today. What is he saying to the seniors of this province with respect to their drug benefits, something which has been guaranteed to them—guaranteed to them—by a Conservative government, by a Liberal government, by a New Democratic government? Are you going to break that pledge and are you going to tear up page 6 of The Common Sense Revolution on the backs of the senior citizens of this province?

Hon Mr Harris: I have a very clear message, not only for the honourable member, but for members of the House and for the senior citizens, that no, in fact this government has been unequivocal in fighting for the principles of the Canada Health Act that are there and we continue to do that.

I'd like to say this: Unlike the former government, that without consultation brought in 100% user fees, delisted drugs, didn't tell senior citizens, denied them access to drugs that were there, we do not intend to proceed that way. We will not proceed that way.

We rather would prefer to proceed along the lines of the government of Saskatchewan, where Premier Romanow and the NDP government consulted with seniors, looked at those programs that were not covered under the Canada Health Act, consulted with Ontarians and brought in a plan that provided the greatest access they could to drugs. The Trillium drug plan, which the former government brought in, was income-tested, so that principle's not new in Ontario, if you're looking at "new." Delisting has been brought in by both the previous governments; that principle is not new. What's new is that we plan to respect the Canada Health Act and we plan to consult with those who are going to be affected.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I'd like to now ask a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. First of all, in doing so, I'd like to congratulate him on his election for the constituency of Markham and say that all of us wish him well in this very challenging portfolio. Having said that, now let's get down to work.

Minister, I've been struck by the number of comments that you appear to have made in response to questions from reporters and others, and this is the first opportunity you and I have had to discuss some of these issues.

This week, thousands of people who are on social assistance are going to be receiving their cheques, which are going to be reduced by close to 22%. I wonder if the minister can tell us what studies and analysis he and his staff have done and who he thinks is going to be primarily affected by these cuts.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): First of all, I'd like to reconfirm our commitment as a government that we must and we will take action right now to ensure the system will continue for people who are truly in need. I want to also point out that during the last 10 years, expenditures in welfare have soared 310%, giving Ontario an average of 35% above the national average of the other provinces.

This is very relevant. The rate reduction that we're looking at and to which we are committed will maintain welfare benefits at 10% above the average of the other provinces. This is important for us to see. We will also protect the benefits for the disabled and aged.

With respect, we had to fix this system. This system was broken. No great study was necessary to realize this. When you have soaring welfare costs that are being paid by the taxpayers of this province, it's very clear to anyone in this province. You don't need to spend a million dollars on a study to realize this.

Mr Rae: A great conservative philosopher, Edmund Burke, 200 years ago warned people of the danger of destroying institutions in the name of a theory. What this government is doing is hurting people very badly in the name of a theory, and I think it's highly destructive.

The minister has just admitted something which, I'm afraid to say, doesn't surprise me; I think at the end of his answer he admitted that there has been no study done, no analysis of the impact of the 22% cut. Perhaps I would say to the minister that I have a copy of briefing notes prepared for the Metro social services department in which it states very clearly that in terms of basic needs—and I'm quoting from this very brief report:

"The greatest impact is on children. Poor nutrition leads to impact on learning ability...more use of overtaxed food banks. School breakfast and lunch programs do not service preschool children. Government-run food

programs undermine the family value of self-sufficiency."

The minister also has responsibility for children as well as having responsibility for welfare. I wonder if he would care to explain to the House, because I was somewhat taken aback by his comments—at least there are quotation marks around some comments he made recently with respect to these cuts, where he says: "If it's a situation where the child is in danger, then the CAS should come in and see what they can do. On the other hand, if the person is responsible, they should try to get some work."

I'm asking the minister, who is responsible for the welfare of children, can he assure us categorically today, on the basis of the best advice he has from the ministry, that children will not be put in danger and will not be negatively affected by the cuts which are being proposed and being put in place by the government of which he's a member? Can he give us that assurance today?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The honourable member has mentioned several points, so I'm going to have to respond at it. It wasn't quite the one-sentence question he addressed to the Premier.

First of all, with respect, we have, as part of our platform and part of our regulations, agreed to allow people the opportunity to earn back the effect of any cut to their welfare payments. We might also add at this point in time that the reason we made the announcement in July was to give people the opportunity to get their affairs in order, in order to find a part-time job.

In fact, you might argue that people had two years' notice to get their affairs in order, because that's in The Common Sense Revolution, which all of you seem to have. Therefore, this government has allowed people the time to get their affairs in order. We've given ample warning.

With respect to the specific question the member has asked, I must say that I was responding to a question with respect to the definition of an irresponsible parent; that if that child was in danger, if that child was needing protection, would that be a case for the CAS? I'll tell you, the CAS is responsible for the safety of children. This was a question of safety and not a question of poverty.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would the minister wrap up his answer, please.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I might reiterate one more time that the welfare cut brought the province of Ontario to 10% above the average of the other provinces, and I must add again and reiterate that we have given them the opportunity to earn back what the cut has taken away.

Mr Rae: I think it's worth pointing out that in this same report—I would be surprised if you didn't have a copy of it, and if you don't, I'll certainly be happy to send it over to you, because it's not something you shouldn't know—rental costs in Ontario are between 30% and 40% higher than in the rest of Canada; food costs in Ontario are 4% higher than in the rest of Canada. "On closer scrutiny," and I'm just quoting from the report, "it appears that the difference between Ontario benefits and other provinces is primarily the result of higher accom-

modation costs." They give as an example that in Ontario a single adult can receive as much as \$165.20 more in assistance but they pay on average \$180 more in rent, so their net is \$17 less.

I just would come back again to the minister on this question of kids. You're looking at a reduction for a mother and two children of somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$250 to \$270 a month. You have a rent which is not going to go down. You have a clear statement which is expressed in this report that the greatest impact is on children.

You talk, in all your statements, about your concern for the next generation and what kind of world they're going to inherit. There are hundreds of thousands of kids next week who are going to have less food, who are going to have crummier clothes and who are going to be living in more insecure situations, whose parents, whose mothers and fathers, are going to be leaving themselves open to being evicted and put out on the street.

I'd like to ask the minister, did he in cabinet at any time advocate or express a single factual thought that said, "This ideology in The Common Sense Revolution might sound good, but on closer analysis it doesn't make common sense"? Did you have the courage to do that in cabinet or not?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I might point out that the safety and the wellbeing of children is a concern of this government. I want to point out as well that we have to undergo a different way of thinking out there. People have got to learn again to start to take responsibility for themselves and their families and not leave it to everyone else to do.

I might point out to the member that in 1993 a study was done with respect to the cost of living in the city of Toronto, which is the example the member is speaking about. That study indicated that the cost of living in Toronto as compared to the other major cities across the country was 110% of the cost. This is just a coincidence but, gee whiz, we reduced the welfare rate to 10% above the cost of the other provinces. As the member has asked, what about clothing and going back to school, I might also point out one more time that there is a back-to-school clothing allowance which is part of the social assistance program.

The Speaker: Would the minister wrap up his answer, please.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'll wrap up by just saying once again that we've only reduced the welfare rates to 10% above the average of the other provinces, and we have allowed people to earn back, in that provision, what we've taken away. But I think people have got to learn to take responsibility for themselves and their families once again.

The Speaker: I must remind honourable members that we've used 40 minutes for the first four questions. The honourable member for Oriole has the floor.

DENNIS TIMBRELL

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Health about a situation that's upsetting people all over the province. While the Premier acknowledges that you are considering real cuts to

existing services, and district health councils across the province are conducting reviews on restructuring the delivery of health services in their communities—in fact, as we know, tomorrow the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council will be releasing a report recommending that some of our hospitals close as a cost-cutting measure. We know, Minister, that hospitals had been struggling to provide better care for patients with less government dollars. We also know that the recently departed president of the Ontario Hospital Association, one Dennis Timbrell, gave himself a bonus of taxpayers' money valued at \$583,000.

Minister, your government constantly talks of house cleaning, of finding savings, cost-cutting and setting a good example for your transfer partners. But a former Progressive Conservative Minister of Health has taken Ontario taxpayers to the cleaners. Minister, how could you let this happen?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): Mr Speaker, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker. You certainly have my confidence and obviously the confidence of the majority of the members of this House, and I wish you well.

I say to the honourable member for Oriole that the deal between Liberty and Blue Cross was a deal that was conducted under the previous NDP government. I don't say that in any political or malicious way, because the NDP government at that time took the proper position, that this was a private contractual deal between the Ontario Hospital Association and its Blue Cross insurance agency. The Ontario government has no jurisdiction in this matter. The only government agency that had to review that particular deal was the federal competition bureau. At this point we are taking no opinion on what is a very serious contractual and legal matter between Mr Timbrell and the Ontario Hospital Association.

Mrs Caplan: Minister, let me remind you that the Ontario Hospital Association is funded by hospitals, which receive their money in the form of transfers from your government. You, the Premier and the Finance minister are all telling Ontarians that we must tighten our belts. Allowing Mr Timbrell to take hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money does not set a very good example to your transfer partners. Minister, you know how many health services could be provided by \$583,000. Money that could be much better used in health services is being funnelled into Mr Timbrell's bank account. Will you ask the Premier's good friend, your former colleague Mr Timbrell, to repay the money to the Ontario Hospital Association and to the taxpayers of this province?

Hon Mr Wilson: I want to remind, very politely, the honourable member that this is a very serious matter between the Ontario Hospital Association and one of its employees. This matter, from what I read and hear and see through the media, could very well end up before the courts at some point. I agree that we have to be very diligent in the spending of public money. The Ontario Hospital Association receives its money, you are correct, from Ontario hospitals. At this point, under current legislation, it is the members of the hospital association

that must deal with this matter. I would caution the honourable member against making further comment on this lest she finds herself before the courts.

LABOUR RELATIONS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): As is the tradition, through you I would like to congratulate the member for Waterloo North on her re-election personally, and also to her elevation to cabinet, and wish her the very best personally in that regard.

One of the very first casualties of the Common Sense Revolution has clearly been any hope that workers have rights in this province that will be protected. There are plans, we know, to gut the Ministry of Labour by cutting it in half. WCB benefits have already been announced with regard to cuts for men and women who are disabled on the job. Protection for older workers and workers in companies that go bankrupt are being wiped out. Women will not get all the money they are entitled to under the pay equity law. The successful Workplace Health and Safety Agency is being dismantled. This government is not going to be satisfied with just rolling back Bill 40; you obviously want to take away gains that workers have made for decades in this province under the jurisdiction of different kinds of governments.

My question to you is: How can you possibly justify abandoning the rights and needs and safety of workers in this province at this time?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): I would just like to remind you that what we are attempting to do is to protect the rights of workers. Through the changes that we are going to make to the Labour Relations Act we are going to introduce democracy into the workplace. We are going to give individuals the opportunity to exercise a secret ballot for certification, for strike votes. Also, what we are doing, we are taking a look at workplace health and safety in this province. We are doing a review, and at the end of the 100 days I hope to be presented with a model for workplace health and safety that will indeed reduce and eliminate as much as possible accidents, injuries and illness in this province.

We do care about workers and that's why we are taking the action that we are today and taking it so quickly and so decisively.

Mr Christopherson: There is not a chance that anyone involved with and knowledgeable about the agenda of this government and the labour legislation that exists believes for one second that you stand for anything other than dismantling the rights of workers in this province, and words aren't going to change that.

We know that in addition to The Common Sense Revolution, which talked about making a priority of community safety and a promise to protect funding for law enforcement, in the throne speech yesterday you had the audacity to say that ensuring safety in the workplace is a key priority of your government, and yet we know from a secret government document leaked out of your ministry late last week that there are plans right now to eliminate 20% of the health and safety inspectors in that ministry.

My question to you is: Since everything this government has done and announced has been a virtual attack on the rights of workers, will you at the very least today commit to protecting those health and safety inspectors from the extreme anti-worker, cost-cutting people who are in the Premier's office? Will you commit today to protect those health and safety inspectors or not?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I understand your concerns about workplace health and safety. That's why I have put in place the review panel to ensure that we do have the best system possible in this jurisdiction or any other jurisdiction. I also commit to you that we will take a look at how we can deliver and ensure that we have safety in the workplace.

HAEMODIALYSIS

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): My question is to the Minister of Health. There are quite a number of patients in my riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay who depend on lifesaving dialysis treatment. These patients must travel a considerable distance to receive dialysis services in sometimes hazardous weather conditions. I am concerned that the difficulty in accessing dialysis services is a problem province-wide. What is the minister doing to ensure that these needs will be met close to home when patients need them?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank the honourable member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay for a very serious question, because we heard some heckles as my colleague asked that question. I want you to know that in the time I was Health critic—and I worked on this issue for some two and a half years when the NDP government was in power—I personally lost seven friends in Collingwood and Alliston because of the inability of the previous government to do anything but study the dialysis issue in this province. We saw the previous government spend over \$100,000 on three studies, including one round of hearings down at the social development committee in this building.

The fact of the matter is, I was very proud on behalf of our government on August 17 to be able to take some of the administrative savings we had found in the health care budget to reinvest \$25 million into dialysis services and for the first time in the history of this province to make that announcement in a way that will drive those services closer to where the patients live and work and bring dignity back to their lives.

Mr Grimmett: Studies indicate that the demand for renal dialysis services continues to climb yearly. How will your strategy cope with this expanding demand?

Hon Mr Wilson: It is important, I think, for all members to note that this is one of the fastest-growing diseases. End-stage kidney failure is one of the fastest-growing diseases among us today. It grows at at least a rate of 10% per year. We've known that for a few years now. The population's getting older. It tends to be a disease that hits people a little later in life, and our announcement to create 580 new dialysis spaces in this province is a 15% increase in the capacity to serve those people. That should put us ahead of the growth in this disease, and I'm proud that for the first time in this particular issue area, the government of Ontario is trying

to get ahead and anticipate the needs of the population.

The member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay and all members will want to be aware that we've put out the request for proposal, and each and every member in this Legislature is encouraged to go back to their riding to find out whether you have haemodialysis or other dialysis patients and to put in proposals so that we can put dialysis clinics and satellites closer to where people live and work. That's what we're committed to doing, and I'm proud that we've built some extra capacity into the system—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would the minister wrap up his question, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: —so that we're not always playing catch-up when people's lives are at stake.

1520

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): Mr Speaker, let me first of all add my voice to the congratulations which have already been offered to you, sir. I think the challenges ahead for you are enormous. Speaking as a new member, I'm daunted by the task that you have to face.

On behalf of a very large segment of the Ontario population that has been rocked by the gruesome and shocking evidence brought forth in the Bernardo trial, I would like to address my question to the Attorney General.

Sir, one of the hallmarks of a fair society is an equitable justice system. Safety in our homes and communities is of paramount concern to Ontario residents and thus requires the Legislature's utmost attention. In fact, the minister's own party booklet, entitled A Blueprint for Justice and Community Safety in Ontario, acknowledges a growing perception that sentencing in our courts is no longer providing either a deterrent or rehabilitation. This, in turn, is undermining public confidence in the integrity of the criminal justice system.

Therefore, I would like to ask the honourable minister to explain to this House the actions he intends to take with respect to a review of the Karla Homolka plea bargaining agreement.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, with responsibility for Native Affairs): There is no question that the facts of this particular case that are now before the public demand us to express the deepest sorrow for the victims and for their families and certainly for me to express, as the Attorney General, how aware I am personally of how this tragedy has affected every community in the province.

What is a very difficult aspect of this is the fact that I must tell everyone in this Legislature that this case is not completed; it is not yet finished; it is still before the courts. We are only up to the sentencing aspect; the trial is not finished. As a result of that, I will also advise everyone in this Legislature that this very agreement the member talks about is a piece of evidence before that court and anything I say about that can prejudice or jeopardize the completion of this trial. Everyone in this Legislature must be aware of that.

At the appropriate time, I have indicated that I want

and will be accountable to the people in this province so that they understand very clearly what happened and what all of these aspects of this case are all about. I intend to comply with that obligation of being accountable. The problem that I have now—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Could you wind up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Harnick: —is that I don't want to jeopardize, nor does any other member of this Legislature, the completion of this trial.

Ms Castrilli: With respect, the minister is stalling. All I've asked is a commitment on the part of this government to review the facts in this case at the appropriate time, yes, indeed. But we feel quite strongly that there is evidence in the Criminal Code that would allow the Attorney General to deal with this case. Do we have such a commitment from the minister?

Hon Mr Harnick: I have indicated that I intend to be accountable, and if a review is what should be done, it will be done. That will be considered when the case is completed. To do anything now, to make any commitments now, would jeopardize the fair trial and it would jeopardize the result that everyone in this Legislature so dearly wants. The member should understand that.

NIAGARA REGION

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): I've got a question and it's been a long time coming. Bear with me, because I've got a feeling I may not get a supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Who's the question to?

Mr Kormos: To the Premier. You know, in June of this year, Niagara region, during the course of the election, got itself four Tory MPPs. That's the decision of the electorate. But then it just as promptly got the shaft. It got skewered by a government that appears not to give a tinker's dam about Niagara region.

First, they dismantle the Niagara tender fruit lands program, pulling the rug out from underneath farmers in Niagara region who are hanging on and had the most modest of hope that the Niagara tender fruit lands program was going to carry them through some very difficult times.

Then they cancel the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation relocation to Niagara Falls, which held some modest hope for all of Niagara region for the 400 jobs that it would provide there, a region that is among the highest-hit in the province in terms of unemployment.

The Speaker: Premier.

Mr Kormos: As I said, bear with me, please, Speaker; I know I'm not going to get a supplementary.

The Speaker: Ask your question.

Mr Kormos: Then the Premier dithers and flip-flops on the issue of a casino location in Niagara Falls. It's not to suggest that everybody in Niagara thinks that a casino is going to be the panacea for all of Niagara region's ills, but we know it will create 2,000 jobs in short order, all funded by the private sector.

Please, will the Premier explain why he's so unconcerned about the high levels of unemployment in Niagara

region, why he's abandoned Niagara region and the unemployed women and men there, and why truly he doesn't give a tinker's dam about the economic future of that very important part of the province?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): First, let me congratulate the honourable member on his re-election.

As I was thinking earlier of the broken promises of his government, I was going to refer them to the member for Welland-Thorold. He has a longer list than I have when he talks about employee moves—to Chatham, to Brantford, to Haileybury, to Kingston, to Windsor, to Elliot Lake—that were cancelled by the former government.

This was sort of a three-ministry, tripartite question, I guess, to complete the end of the day. Let me say that in the fullness of time we are happy to answer the details of all three. The ministry employee move previously announced by the government, if I could take that part of it, started out, I think, with over 400 employees. Then, by the time we took office and took a look at it, it was down to 68 employees, for whom the government had a building for 400 employees. Let me say that this was a difficult decision, but I think the people of Niagara understood that if ever there was a ridiculous decision that was made by the former government, this huge, monstrous building with no people to go in it was one. We responsibly had to look at it.

I want to say—I think the question was the people of Niagara region—that I believe the number of representatives elected in this caucus and on this side of the House is reflective of the fact that the people of Niagara region felt for the last 10 years, and the last five years particularly, that they were not well served by the government of the day, that in fact they needed a change of direction, they needed job creation, they needed a government that said it was open for business, they needed a government that would live within its means.

The Speaker: Would the Premier wind up, please.

Hon Mr Harris: I want to say directly to all the people in Niagara Peninsula that we will honour that commitment for which they sent us a number of representatives. I believe four to five years from now, when we go back to the people, they will say: "We did the right thing. Here's a government that cares about us and all of Ontario, and we're going to send them back there for another five years."

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I'd like to inform the House that there is a special guest in the Speaker's gallery today. It's my wife, Marjorie.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(a), the House will not meet to consider private members' public business on Thursday morning, October 5, 1995, or Thursday morning, October 12, 1995, but will meet at 1:30 pm on those days.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): All in favour? Agreed.

1530

PETITIONS

ONTARIO HOUSING CORP

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I have a petition from the good people of Kenora and it reads:

"The government has stated it plans on selling off 84,000 units which are owned by Ontario Housing Corp. We are in favour of keeping Ontario Housing Corp, which assists people on limited incomes to have decent, affordable housing."

Again, Mr Speaker, that's signed by a good number of my constituents from the town of Kenora.

QUEEN STREET MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

"We, the undersigned, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is presently considering funding a 20-bed forensic facility for the criminally insane at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre; and

"Whereas the nearby community is already home to the highest number of ex-psychiatric patients and social service organizations in hundreds of licensed and unlicensed rooming houses, group homes and crisis care facilities in all of Canada; and

"Whereas there are other neighbourhoods where the criminally insane could be assessed and treated; and

"Whereas no one was consulted—not the local residents and business community, not leaders of community organizations, not education and child care providers and not even local members of provincial Parliament;

"We, the undersigned residents and business owners of our community, urge the PC government of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to accommodate the criminally insane in an expanded Queen Street Mental Health Centre until a public consultation process is completed."

I have signed my name to this petition.

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition from a large number of people residing in the Niagara Peninsula concerning a matter that was discussed this afternoon in the House. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, demand that Karla Homolka's plea bargain be revoked by the Attorney General of Ontario, the Honourable Charles Harnick."

As I say, it is signed by a large number of people here, and I affix my signature to this petition.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ELECTION AMENDMENT ACT. 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT LA LOI ÉLECTORALE

Mr McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 2, An Act to amend the Election Act / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is the House in favour of that? Carried.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South): My bill quite

simply would eliminate the requirement that voters' lists in cities be publicly posted during an election. My bill addresses privacy concerns and requires merely that voters' lists be posted for inspection in the returning office.

The Speaker: No further introduction of bills?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I think you will find that there is unanimous consent to move a motion with respect to the Integrity Commissioner.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed. INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move that a humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of the Honourable Gregory Evans, current Conflict of Interest Commissioner, as Integrity Commissioner for the province of Ontario, as provided in section 23 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, SO 1994, chapter 38, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act;

"And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker."

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Agreed? Agreed.

Would the government House leader like to make some short remarks?

Hon Mr Eves: Yes. I believe, Mr Speaker, you will find that there is agreement that each of the three parties will have some brief remarks to make about the Integrity Commissioner.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to the appointment of the Integrity Commissioner, the Honourable Gregory Evans. In addition to his distinguished career as both lawyer and Chief Justice of the Ontario Supreme Court, Judge Evans brings with him to his position over seven years' experience as an officer of the Legislative Assembly in the role of Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Since 1988, Judge Evans has served the Legislature and indeed the entire province with tremendous distinction, providing guidance and advice to all members of the House. His extraordinary contribution is perhaps most clearly exemplified by the leadership role he played in the development of the Members' Integrity Act.

Bill 209 of the previous Parliament, which recognizes the importance of public service and promotes confidence in the integrity of members of this House, is the result of constructive dialogue and cooperation between all parties.

Judge Evans's knowledge and guidance throughout that process was integral to the development of the act. I believe the Members' Integrity Act will serve both the people of Ontario and the members of this and future parliaments very well and I am confident that Judge Evans will continue to act with great distinction in his role as Integrity Commissioner.

On behalf of the Premier and our caucus, I welcome the appointment of Judge Evans to the position of Integrity Commissioner and offer our cooperation to him as he performs his duties set out in the bill and conferred upon him by this House.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): We in the official opposition are certainly in agreement with this motion, and we were in agreement, as the government House leader has appropriately pointed out, with the development of the Members' Integrity Act.

It cannot be emphasized too much the significant role that Justice Evans played in the development of that act, in the advice that he provided. I might add that his experience as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, as it was known then, is one which I think is respected by all members of the Legislature because we saw that he carried out his duties and responsibilities in a very fair and even-minded way.

Justice Evans and his office, by the way, are also very helpful in terms of the advice that is provided to members of the Legislature when inquiries are made, when representations are made, because there are many difficult circumstances that we face as individual members today in terms of knowing what, in 1995, a conflict of interest is, or perhaps the demands that are put on members of the Legislature by constituents place them in a rather vulnerable position in terms of violation of laws.

1540

Justice Evans and his office have both been very helpful in terms of providing the necessary guidance to members. His own background lends itself to this. He's a distinguished individual, highly respected within the legal community, highly respected by members of this Legislature.

The integrity act to which reference is made is one which is most suitable to those of us who govern in the 1990s. It is specific enough that it prevents some of the problems that can arise when conflicts of interest are brought forward. On the other hand, it has a little bit of flexibility in that it allows the commissioner, if I may use the term, to exercise some common sense in the application of the act; and certainly that will be pleasing to members of the governing side.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): In the true meaning of the word.

Mr Bradley: As the member for Riverside indicates: In the true meaning of the word.

We are certainly supportive of this. I think that Justice Evans will continue to do an outstanding job in this position, though the name is now changed to the Integrity Commissioner, and I think our political process in this province will be even improved with the implementation of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994.

Mr Cooke: I want to join with my colleagues, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, in enthusiastically endorsing the appointment of Justice Evans.

The government House leader made reference to the process by which the current legislation was developed, and I want to echo his comments that the leadership that Mr Evans provided, the consensus that he developed with

all three political parties to make sure that the legislation was introduced and passed with all-party support, his own experience that he used as our Conflict of Interest Commissioner to see where the weaknesses of the existing legislation were and other experiences in other jurisdictions, I think was very helpful. In fact, it was the fundamental step that was necessary in order to develop this legislation and see it go through in the last Parliament and now be enacted here.

I'm also always amazed when we go see Judge Evans every year because, you know, quite often in public life and in public offices the size of those offices begin to increase over time; and all of us now, I think, have seen Mr Evans this year and see that the size of the office is the same now as it was seven years ago. All of us are dealt with in a very efficient way, the operation is very efficient and it provides an incredibly important public service.

I also know that Judge Evans offered advice to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the municipal sector when they were developing the municipal conflict-of-interest legislation as well, and as far back as when it started with Mr Sweeney when he was the minister.

So there's a lot of expertise that exists over in that operation. I think the province and the Legislature is very fortunate indeed to have somebody like Judge Evans to perform that role. This legislation is a model and it's a model because of the contribution he's made and the leadership he's provided in developing the legislation. So we, as I say, enthusiastically support this resolution and his appointment.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Ms Fisher moved, seconded by Mr Maves, that a humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable Henry Newton Rowell Jackman, a Member of the Order of Canada, Knight in the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, doctor of laws, bachelor of laws, bachelor of arts, Honorary Colonel of the Governor General's Horse Guards, Honorary Colonel of 429 Squadron at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Honorary Captain of the Fifth Canadian Maritime Operations Group at Halifax, Nova Scotia, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us.

Ms Barb Fisher (Bruce): On behalf of the people I represent in the riding of Bruce, it is my privilege and honour to move today the adoption of the first speech from the throne from our new government led by the Honourable Mike Harris.

This speech from the throne is a beginning. It is a beginning of matching our deeds with our words. Our words are outlined in The Common Sense Revolution, the policy platform that we campaigned on in the last

election. This is the policy platform that has been mandated by the people of Ontario in electing our new government with a majority of seats in this assembly.

This Common Sense Revolution was heard throughout my entire Bruce riding, from Tobermory to Mildmay and from Tara to Huron township. The people of my riding in the agricultural community, in the tourism industry, at the Bruce nuclear power development site, in small business and in communities throughout our area heard this platform and gave me the mandate to support this platform and to represent them in a government dedicated to its implementation.

Throughout Ontario our new government's mandate from the people was for the major change that this province requires if we and our children are to have the kinds of jobs, hope, growth and opportunities that are necessary to build a rewarding and successful life in this province.

It is the beginning of turnaround management and changing the way in which government works. It is bringing about this major change through implementing our plan to cut spending, cut taxes, eliminate barriers to job creation, cut the size of government and balance the provincial budget during the first term of a Mike Harris government.

First and foremost, we must get government spending under control after 10 years of overspending. If we are to continue providing the services that people need, we must ensure the province's financial stability and balance the provincial budget.

To do this, we must make decisions about the core responsibilities of government, so we are assessing those things that government must do and those that are better left to individuals, communities, the private sector and the volunteer sector.

This government is committed to maintaining the excellence of our health care system. We will preserve the health care budget at current levels. There are opportunities for savings in the current system, and those savings will be reinvested into health services that our people need.

We are equally committed to classroom education and policing as the other priority areas for this government. The government will establish a school nutrition program to ensure that children who may not be receiving proper nutrition in their homes, our young people, will be properly nourished before they start their school day. 1550

Other specific education and training steps that we are actively implementing are: ensuring that school boards reduce overall costs while maintaining high-quality classroom education for our students. We want to give the local community flexibility to make choices and improve efficiency in the local school system, including restoring junior kindergarten as a local community option starting in the 1996-97 school year. And we are ensuring that we have a demanding core curriculum, that there is regular testing for our students and that parents and students receive standardized report cards.

The people of my Bruce riding, not unlike the people

in the rest of Ontario, have been hurt by the last 10 years of tax-and-spend governments. My riding has natural beauty, reflected by the Bruce Peninsula National Park, it makes a major agricultural contribution to our province, and it has produced one third of our province's electricity from the Bruce nuclear power development site.

All of our valuable assets and the people associated with them have been struggling and are asking for leadership with vision and the chance to restore our pride and honour to ourselves and our province.

This throne speech is about change in the way government works, to make it work for the people again and not just for the special interests. To do this, we must once again make decisions about the core responsibilities of government, so we are assessing those things that government must do and those that are better left to individuals, communities and the private sector.

To achieve the savings required to maintain a sound fiscal footing, we need the help of our transfer partners. Two thirds of the provincial budget funds services provided by the municipalities, hospitals, universities and colleges and other agencies. Our transfer partners too must bring their own spending under control and seek more efficient and cost-effective ways of providing services.

Through this throne speech, we are putting back in place what the people have told us they want: to restore the traditional beliefs that we, our families and our communities share and cherish, from my riding of Bruce and all across the regions, towns and cities of this great province. This throne speech reflects the people's belief in hard work. It also reflects the belief that people should be rewarded fairly for their hard work, to save or spend that reward as they see fit, not how government sees fit to spend it for them. It is an expression of the mandate we were given by the people, that in order for our citizens, their families and communities to enjoy a safe and prosperous society, each of us as individuals must first take responsibility for our own personal lives and the security and future of our families.

This government is committed to ending the cycle of welfare dependency and despair by getting able-bodied welfare recipients back into the workforce. To create a welfare system that is a hand up, not a handout, we are committed to mandatory workfare. Under this program, if welfare recipients do not participate, they will lose their benefits.

To break this cycle of dependency and to give all Ontarians a fair chance the following steps are required: to begin requiring able-bodied welfare recipients, except single parents with young children, to perform community service or enrol in work or training programs in exchange for their benefits. We are continuing with our plans to adjust social assistance rates so that on average they are 10% higher than the average of the other nine provinces. Welfare benefits for seniors, persons with disabilities and their families will not be reduced. We are taking steps to end waste and fraud by introducing control measures, including tighter requirements for eligibility. Welfare for 16- and 17-year-olds has been curtailed and it will be phased out.

This throne speech is also about the belief that people deserve and must have accountability from those whom they elect and trust with their power. To achieve this accountability, we are preparing legislation to reduce the number of politicians in Ontario, as we campaigned on and stated in the Common Sense Revolution. This new legislation will mean that in the next general election in Ontario, voters will elect a smaller Legislature. Our goal is to reduce the number of seats from 130 to 99, the same as Ontario's representation in the House of Commons.

Also, we will be introducing, as stated in The Common Sense Revolution, legislation that will be based on the recommendations of the recently announced commission on MPP compensation. This reform will scrap the gold-plated MPP pension plan, eliminate tax-free allowances and take responsibility for setting pay away from the elected representatives. This is good news for ordinary Ontarians, who want us to reflect back to them that we will be guided by the same guidelines as average working Ontarians.

Those are the core guiding principles that have directed this first throne speech. This is the core of the mandate which this government received from the people of this province on June 8. It was the core of our campaign policy platform during the election campaign.

Our province now has the leader and a Premier, Mike Harris, who believes in our people and who is proud of their traditional values. We finally have a Premier and a government which will summon from each of us the best of our character and who will call on us as a province to our full potential. This is what we have been asked to do, and we will. The election last June was about listening to the people, being accountable to them and, as a government, doing the same kind of things that my family and yours have had to do in our lives in order to get by for the last 10 years.

This new government accepts and respects the trust the people of this province have loaned to us, and we are working very hard on their behalf to make sure that our deeds match our words, that our deeds match the words of The Common Sense Revolution. It isn't always easy matching one's deeds to one's words. Every parent has had experience of that in their family lives. It isn't easy, but it has to be done, and this government will see it done.

The people of this province clearly told us in the last election that Ontario was on the wrong track and they mandated this government and its program to set a new course in the proper direction. The people told us, and this document reflects what they said to us, that if we are to fix the problems in this province, then our new government must be prepared to make the tough decisions. This first speech from the throne begins that process of making the tough decisions. We are getting on with repairing the last 10 years of governments that have overspent and overtaxed the people of this province.

This throne speech is about changing the status quo. It's about bringing hope and opportunity back to the people of this province. It is about government that must work to stimulate job creation and new investment in our future. We will accomplish that by cutting tax rates,

which will provide the consumers of this province with more money to spend and invest as individuals, families and communities.

The immediate steps that we will take as part of making this province a more prosperous place to live are as follows:

We will cut the provincial income tax rates, starting with our first full budget in 1996-97.

We are eliminating the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll.

We will reduce Workers' Compensation Board premiums by 5%.

We will abolish the annual corporate filing fee.

We will freeze the average rates charged by Ontario Hydro for five years.

We will cut the red tape that is a barrier to growth and new jobs for our business community.

These steps are all reflective of what we said we would do during the election. This government asked for that job. The people of this province gave us that job and that trust in us, and this government accepts that trust and the responsibility and accountability that go with it.

Once again, the major changes that are outlined in this speech from the throne are dedicated to accomplishing the government's goals of giving the taxpayers of Ontario a provincial income tax rate cut of 30% over three years, beginning in 1996-97. This is what ordinary Ontarians mean when they speak of reward for hard work. The people of this province will, through tax reduction, keep more of their money to spend, save and use as they see fit—not as government sees fit to spend it for them, as they have done for the last 10 years. The changes outlined here will contribute to this extra money going to the pocketbooks of Ontarians, not going to the pocketbooks of government.

1600

None of these changes, as outlined in the speech from the throne, are easy. Families have had to bring their budgets into line due to changing circumstances. So too must this new government. One knows that when you make these decisions, they are hard but necessary. You know you have to organize yourself and your family to deal with today's problems in order to take advantage of tomorrow's opportunities.

This is the challenge facing this new government, and meeting that challenge won't be easy. If it were, these decisions would already have been made by the previous two governments over the last 10 years. But working together, receiving the encouragement and support of the people, drawing on our traditional strengths, together this government can and will ensure Ontario's future. We can and will bring hope, new jobs and economic growth back to the people of this province.

You can be sure that the tough measures outlined in the throne speech will not be welcomed by the forces of the status quo, the single-issue and special-interest groups. But these tough measures will be understood and accepted by the middle-class taxpayers of this province, the people who carry the load and who pay the freight.

As a wise statesman, Thomas Jefferson, once said: "Equal rights for everyone, special privileges for no one." That simple statement is the core guiding principle of the document which I am moving for adoption.

I believe that the people in my Bruce riding should have equal rights to succeed, as should people throughout Ontario. I believe that small and medium-sized businesses, organizations like the tourism committees, and the individuals in agriculture, in my riding and throughout Ontario, should have the freedom and a framework of government policy that allows them to succeed.

Getting our provincial finances back in order is the first step along our new road. This speech from the throne is not a step that is an end in itself. It is only the beginning, a new beginning for all of us together.

Ontarians joined in this journey with us. They did so on June 8. Ontarians know that we must share in the difficult things if we are to share in the rewards. It will not be easy, but it is the right thing to do.

This throne speech reflects the commitment of this government to adopt the measures necessary to secure a future for ourselves and for our children. I trust that the people of my Bruce riding and the people throughout Ontario will not only support the difficult decisions this government must make but also share my enthusiasm for the future we can share together.

I move the adoption of the speech from the throne.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It is with great pride that I stand before the Assembly today as the newly elected representative for the riding of Niagara Falls. As a new member of the Mike Harris turnaround management team, I second the motion to adopt the first speech from the throne of this new government.

I would tell you that yesterday I met with the Honourable Robert D. Nicholson, a former member of Parliament for Niagara Falls. I told him about the privilege today of seconding the speech from the throne, and his advice to me was, "Make the most of it." So I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize to the members assembled if you're here a lot longer than you expected.

I would like to take this opportunity not only to discuss the throne speech and to tell the members assembled about Niagara Falls but also to extend sincere congratulations and good wishes.

I would like to congratulate the honourable member for Simcoe East on his election to the Speaker's chair. He is a very worthy member and his ascension readily reflects the high regard in which other members hold him.

I would also like to congratulate all members for their electoral success on June 8. I am particularly happy to be joined by friends and fellow Niagara region representatives Tim Hudak, Tom Froese and Frank Sheehan. At the same time, I congratulate members of cabinet and wish them well in their future endeavours. I look forward to working with all members over the coming years towards the common goal of making Ontario a better and more prosperous place in which to live.

I congratulate the Premier upon his election victory. I thank him for his excellent leadership and offer my continued support as he goes forward to face the task of

righting the Ontario ship, which over the past decade has been steered so badly off course.

I would like to acknowledge my Niagara Falls predecessors, House member Margaret Harrington, the Honourable Vincent Kerrio and the Honourable John Clement, for their service to the community. Mr Kerrio served the community as its representative for 15 years and is now enjoying retirement in the Falls. I know that Mr Kerrio is currently experiencing some ill health, and I would like to wish him a speedy recovery. Mr Clement was a minister in Premier Davis's government of 1971-75.

As the first Conservative elected in Niagara Falls since Mr Clement, it was a great thrill to have Mr Clement at Queen's Park for my official swearing-in ceremony. Many of my constituents who came to Toronto for the occasion were just as pleased to see and visit with one of our riding's most distinguished citizens, Mr John T. Clement.

Lastly, I would like to thank the residents of Niagara Falls for bestowing upon me the honour of acting as their representative. It is a position which I have educated myself for and worked towards for some time now, and I thank Niagara citizens for their support. I intend to make my community as proud of its representative as I am of Niagara Falls.

It is a special honour and privilege for me, on behalf of my constituents, to stand today and second a throne speech. It is a great opportunity to talk about the goals of the people of Niagara Falls. As the gateway to Ontario and Canada, Niagara Falls and its 75,000 citizens are proud to be the hosts of the tourist capital of Canada. Over 12 million visitors a year come to Niagara to witness the natural wonder which is the mighty falls itself. These visitors bring tens of millions of dollars into Ontario and support hundreds of businesses in the hospitality industry throughout our province.

The tourist sector is now, more than ever, vital to Niagara Falls. Why? Because over the past decade Niagara has seen its industrial base chased away by government red tape, onerous labour legislation, high utility rates and crushing tax rates. The tourist industry in Niagara Falls must find some way to induce tourists to stay beyond their average four-hour stay in our fair city. It is no secret that the people of Niagara Falls would like to have a casino operation within their midst. We recently had a municipal referendum on this issue, and an overwhelming majority supported such a development. It would be an important tourist attraction for a vital tourist centre. It would add night-time and off-season entertainment which would help to keep people in town for four days instead of four hours.

However, this government clearly has other priorities which will come first in its mandate. But in the meantime it is essential that the people of Niagara Falls join this government in embracing the traditional Ontario value of self-responsibility.

We in Niagara can begin to find new and better ways to package ourselves as a tourist destination for the rest of the world. From a Niagara Falls base, a visitor can tour the beautiful wine region of Niagara and Niagara-on-the-Lake; take in shows and performances in Niagara-on-

the-Lake, Toronto and Buffalo; golf at over 30 competitive golf courses, all within a 20-minute drive of the falls itself; attend many sporting events; tour the incredibly beautiful Niagara Parks Commission parkway system and attractions and take in historical sites unlike any other in Canada.

It is incumbent upon the people of Niagara to continue to cooperate with one another in their marketing programs and to attract new investment and attractions into the riding, which will benefit the tourist industry, the community and the province as a whole.

Like many Ontario communities, Niagara Falls has experienced difficult times over the last decade; in fact, maybe one should refer to it as "the lost decade." But on June 8 the voters in Niagara Falls sent a strong signal through their choice of a provincial representative. By doing so, they endorsed a clear mandate. On that day, they said they wanted a change, a major change. My constituents, like many Ontarians, voted for the changes embodied in the Common Sense Revolution. Since my election, the phrase that my constituents have most often repeated to me has been, "Just do what you said you would do." That sentiment is prevalent throughout my riding and the province as a whole.

1610

Why is it so important to the people of Niagara Falls and Ontario? It is important because past governments in this province and throughout this country have campaigned on one set of promises and, once elected, have implemented something totally different. This has led to an unprecedented level of scepticism and cynicism in our society, and for good reason.

But soon that will all be behind us. Yesterday, my ears and those of my constituents were delighted to hear that this government fully intends to continue to live up to its election promises, and I believe that doing so is essential not only to restoring good government in Ontario but to restoring credibility in government in the eyes of our citizens.

As a younger member of this House, I feel that I represent a growing desire among a new generation to do politics differently. We yearn for a return to the use of common sense in government and for an end to indulgent spending. A symbol of this is our ardent desire to see perks such as the gold-plated pension plan of members of this House dismantled.

Applause.

Mr Maves: I, obviously along with the other members, applaud the Premier for maintaining his commitment to this reform in the throne speech. This action will go a long way to restoring the people's faith in our political system.

This restoration of credibility and faith in government is at the crux of the Common Sense Revolution. But as the throne speech indicated, another achievement that this government will realize is the wrestling down of an out-of-control, bloated public sector, an oversized public sector which has been encumbering the private sector instead of freeing it, which has been challenging development instead of embracing it, hindering change instead of

helping it and stunting economic growth instead of fostering it.

That will come to an end with this new government. Hope and prosperity will once again be restored in Niagara Falls and across this great province of ours.

This throne speech reconfirms the government's commitment to reducing out-of-control government spending, to reducing the size of government, to cutting taxes, to balancing the budget in the first term of a Mike Harris government and to eliminating barriers to economic growth and job creation.

I might point out that in May 1993 the Niagara region released the results of a study of 110 manufacturing firms which at that time remained in the Niagara region. The study showed that several disadvantages were choking businesses in Niagara and causing them to close or move from our uncompetitive economic environment.

What were these disadvantages that were killing jobs and growth in my community? The disadvantages that our manufacturers specified were high taxes, high utility rates, high Workers' Compensation Board premiums and an out-of-control Workers' Compensation Board system, onerous labour legislation and excessive payroll taxes.

Well, Mr Speaker, both the Common Sense Revolution and yesterday's throne speech specifically addressed each and every one of these disadvantages. The government yesterday confirmed its commitment to reducing job-killing payroll taxes, to making our labour relations system fairer and more democratic, to reforming the Workers' Compensation Board system and reducing Workers' Compensation Board premiums. The government yesterday confirmed its commitment to freezing hydro rates for five years and to reducing income tax rates, which are currently among the highest in the world.

This is wonderful news to those manufacturers and small business people in Niagara. It is wonderful news to the people in the Niagara region who have been without jobs for the last five years. It is wonderful news to taxpayers who have seen their personal disposable income fall every year for the past five years due to continuing and massive tax increases by the previous two governments, tax increases which were introduced to satisfy the insatiable thirst of the past governments for more and more revenue to pay for their lack of prudence and strong management.

Those spending binges of the previous government and the one before it have taken their toll. All citizens of Ontario know that you cannot continue to spend more than you bring in, but the past two governments have lacked that common sense of ordinary people. As a result, this province now has a public debt of \$97 billion. This debt continues to grow and without this government's July 21 expenditure reductions, our province would have had its fifth consecutive \$10-billion-plus deficit. As it stands today, the citizens of this province have the highest per capita deficit in Canada.

Ontario, which has always been this country's greatest economic engine, has become one of this country's biggest economic basket cases, with no thanks to previous governments' overspending during the last 10 years.

Tough measures are called for and this government has the wherewithal to undertake these measures. All of our ridings will lose government dollars in the very near future. Many unaffordable programs that no longer have a sensible purpose will be phased out. If we don't take these critical steps today, all of our programs may be in jeopardy tomorrow.

It won't be easy. Believe me, I know. As you've heard today, my riding has had a ministry relocation plan for some time now. Recently, it was revealed that this move was ill-conceived. How ill-conceived? The member for Prescott and Russell stood up earlier and mentioned that it was the Ministry of Tourism that was to move to Niagara Falls. Once we were in government, we learned that only 25 positions from the Ministry of Tourism were scheduled to move to Niagara Falls. It was a cruel hoax from the start, and this, coupled with the continual piecemeal dismantling of the relocation by the previous government, has made the entire move economically unfeasible.

I'd like to add that I was also upset by the member for Welland-Thorold, who had the audacity to blame this government for the end of the relocation manoeuvre. It was his leader who was the architect of the demise of this relocation. I might also point out to that and other members that the Premier's attendance today for my remarks is proof positive of his support for Niagara region.

I brought the concerns of the residents of Niagara Falls to this government about the decision and they were heard. However, I do realize that this government has a commitment to reduce and save where possible. With the aid of the Ontario Realty Corp, the Chair of Management Board and many Niagara Falls citizens, I have focused my attention on attracting a company or institution to occupy that building so that in the long run we will be further ahead than if the relocation had gone forward. We will be concentrating on creating new wealth rather than redistributing existing wealth. I join with the citizens of Niagara Falls in accepting the challenge, as I know many other ridings and members will be called upon to do the same in the near future.

The new government has strong faith in the enterprising nature of its citizens. This government has faith in the free enterprise system. We have faith in the traditional Ontario values which say hard work pays. That is why we are embarking on this path of major change which the people of Niagara Falls and Ontario have given us a clear mandate to do. We are embracing the private sector and embracing the work ethic. Like the people of my riding and all across this great province, we feel a new hope rising from the ashes of the last 10 years.

I would like to tell my colleagues in this House that this new hope and new direction has already paid dividends in the Niagara region. "Where are the jobs?" asked the members opposite earlier today. I'll tell them, in mentioning the honourable member for Niagara South, that in Stevensville, just outside Niagara Falls, a wheel rim manufacturing firm called Ronal has just announced that they will be expanding their operations in Stevensville and will be adding 120 new full-time jobs to their

payroll. Very relevant is the fact that they had been considering moving to Tennessee, but they chose to stay in Ontario and to expand in Ontario because of the change of government, because they believe Ontario is now again open for business.

In Niagara Falls itself, a city whose manufacturing industry was based on easy access to inexpensive and abundant hydro, an abrasives company called Washington Mills was contemplating expanding operations in New York state. Given our commitment to freeze hydro rates for the next five years and knowing the changes that will improve the business climate in Ontario, this company has selected the best option, deciding to expand operations in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

These good-news job creation stories will find many willing applicants for the new positions. To this end, I have to applaud the Minister of Community and Social Services for his initiatives to date and his throne speech commitments to reforming the welfare system of this province. For years, the people of this province have been several steps ahead of their government in demanding changes to a social system that did not work. They didn't need a study, as the members opposite requested today. Unlike the members opposite, they didn't go through the last 10 years with eyes closed. It is abundantly clear that if we do not address the problems with this system, it will very soon be lost entirely.

Since the July 21 announcement, many people have been motivated to again seek work. In Niagara Falls, Mr Mark Brickell from the St Ann's Adult Learning Centre recently informed me that in the last two months over 100 people have come in to sign up for courses. Many of these people have been on social assistance for the last four or five years. These new clients told Mr Brickell that the recent announcements motivated them to come to the school to enhance their skills and to get back into the workforce. When the abovementioned jobs become available, these people will be ready, willing and qualified to fill them.

The minister should be congratulated for his efforts to improve the system, allowing people to regain the dignity that comes with a job, thus promoting independence rather than sponsoring dependence. These examples are proof positive that this government is on the right track, a new direction that will see the private sector, freed from too much government and too much red tape, lead the way back to economic prosperity in this province. It will re-create the enterprising culture which once made Ontario the economic engine of this country.

I am intensely proud of my roots and of my community. My father comes from a well-known Niagara Falls family of 16 children. This family has served the community in many diverse ways: through the Rotary Club, the JCs, the hospital board of governors, the transit commission, the curling club and the hospital ladies' auxiliary, to name only a few. I found myself thinking of them and their wonderful impact on Niagara Falls over

the last 60 years when I heard in the throne speech of the Premier's upcoming volunteerism initiatives. Volunteers are indeed the backbone of my community and represent the very essence of what Ontario used to be and what it can be again.

Niagara Falls is a strong and dynamic community, like so many communities across Ontario. It is blessed with people willing to work hard for their living and it reflects the traditional Ontario belief that we all deserve and can have the opportunity for a prosperous future for ourselves and our children.

The future and prosperity of this province will need the strong leadership of Mike Harris while this government turns around this province. These upcoming and necessary decisions will be difficult and I offer my continued support to our leader during the challenging times ahead. To reach the end of that road will not be easy, but if we are to share in the rewards together, we will have to share in the tough decisions together. We should ask no less of ourselves if we are to make this province the kind of place where my children and yours will have the kind of future they and we all deserve.

For these reasons, I move to second the adoption of the speech from the throne.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Agreed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I would like to give the weekly business statement. Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of October 2, 1995.

On Monday, October 2, the leader of the official opposition will respond to the speech from the throne, after which the House will adjourn.

On Tuesday, October 3, the leader of the third party will respond to the speech from the throne, after which we will start into the normal rotation of speakers. I believe that there is unanimous consent among the three parties to split the time remaining for throne speech debate equally among the three parties. I will move that appropriate motion at that time.

On Wednesday, October 4, and Thursday, October 5, we will continue with the response to the speech from the throne. As per motion passed in the House today, private members' business on Thursday, October 5, has been cancelled.

I would now like to move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Mr Eves has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

The House adjourned at 1625.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands /	Gerretsen, John (L)
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	ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, Leo (PC)
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	Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de		solliciteur général et ministre des Services
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Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
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Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / North	Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)		women's issues / ministre des Affaires
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Chair of the		intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la
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Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	g	Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation
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Egiinton	Economic Development, Trade and Tourism /	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
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Hamilton Mountain			
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York South / -Sud

Yorkview

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Gilchrist, Steve (PC)

Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of

Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs

Scarborough East / -Est

Scarborough-Ellesmere

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

Rae, Bob (ND)

Sergio, Mario (L)

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Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 2 octobre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk Claude L. DesRosiers Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 octobre 1995

The House met at 1330. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): Today I will be introducing two bills concerning the governance and operation of Ontario's legal profession.

The first bill, An Act to amend the Solicitors Act, permits contingency fees whereby lawyers will be allowed to make written deals with clients to keep a percentage of court awards as fees.

Today, only the very rich or the very poor have reasonable access to the expensive court system. Contingency fees are one way to help make the courts more accessible to middle-income Ontarians and will also lessen the demands on legal aid.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada that specifically prohibits a contingency fee contract with a client, and both the Canadian Bar Association—Ontario and the Law Society of Upper Canada are on record as supporting contingency fees.

The Attorney General supported contingency fees while in opposition, so I urge Mr Harnick to take quick action in passing this legislation, which answers a long-standing request of the legal profession and represents a positive step forward for our justice system by both improving access for those unable to afford representation and as a cost-saving mechanism for our civil courts and the Ontario legal aid plan.

The second bill will allow the Law Society of Upper Canada to achieve its goal of making rules to permit the election of benchers on a more democratic and regional basis, which the courts have ruled they do not currently have the authority to do.

Mr Speaker, lastly I want to congratulate you on your appointment and wish you well in the onerous responsibilities that you have ahead.

JOE PICCININNI

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I rise today to pay tribute to the late Joe Piccininni, former city councillor for ward 3 in Toronto's west end and much of the present-day Dovercourt riding. He was a councillor for 25 years, from 1960 to 1985, and he passed away on September 16 of this year.

When I first met Joe Piccininni in 1975 I was a high school student and he was already a 15-year veteran of city council. In the years which followed I came to realize why, to many, he was just "Joe." He was someone who loved his city, Toronto, and was active in supporting life in the city, from boys' and girls' clubs locally to the big and little sports like hockey and soccer. It's appropri-

ate that his contribution to his ward is remembered by the community and recreation centre on St Clair West which bears his name.

He worked hard for his constituents and people remembered that, as many who tried to defeat him over the years learned. He was not a stranger to controversy, but even then he was a tough opponent.

It's been said of Joe Piccininni that he was a politician of another time, but indeed what a time. He was one of the first Italian-Canadian politicians elected in this province at any level of government and he was first elected at a time when it wasn't particularly easy for people of various ethnic backgrounds to be elected to public office.

The strong legacy that he leaves in support for his community I think is important, but today I remember most that contribution that he gave and the road that he paved for many today who are able to be elected to public office from all walks of life and indeed from all ethnic backgrounds. So I remember him mostly with fondness and with gratitude.

RONAL CANADA

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): As the member for Niagara South, I am delighted to relate to the assembly some very good news that has recently transpired in Stevensville, Ontario, home of the Tim Hudak Action Centre.

Ronal Canada, a local manufacturer of wheel rims, has announced a \$10-million capital expansion, including 120 new jobs—a 100% increase in employment—at its Stevensville plant.

In concert with the expansion, a new level of cooperation between union and management has been achieved, guaranteeing labour peace through 1999. According to the plant manager, Rick Visser, Stevensville has been chosen as the expansion site because of management-union cooperation and the new political climate in the province.

This new government in Ontario has chosen to strike a bold new path, eliminating corporate welfare. Instead, we will let the marketplace reward ingenuity, innovation and skill.

The result is that the Stevensville plant has been chosen over international competitors as the expansion site based on the talents of its own workforce and management, not because of government intervention.

The Ronal expansion demonstrates that management and union cooperation and the plans of this bold new government to restore a positive economic environment for business, investment and long-term job growth are already having an effect in the Niagara Peninsula.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member's time has expired.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): The slash-and-burn policies of this government are threatening the lives of the people in northwestern Ontario.

The Minister of Transportation will know that I am referring to the inability of his government to recognize and react to the extremely dangerous conditions of many highways in the northwest, especially the stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway between Vermilion Bay and Kenora in my riding.

Already this year more than 60 accidents on this section of the road have injured 34 people and claimed the lives of three. Since 1990, nine people have died on this, a section of our national highway.

Minister, the dangerous conditions to which I refer have been recognized by the MTO staff for several years. Indeed, a letter from the former NDP minister dating back to early 1993 recognized these dangerous conditions. Unfortunately, he failed to act when he had the chance. I hope that the new minister does not prove to be equally unresponsive.

In several letters to the minister this summer, I reminded him that the design phase of the project is completed. All that is needed is the political go-ahead from this government.

People throughout northwestern Ontario hold this minister and this government responsible. You cannot continue to hold up the decision to proceed with these long overdue repairs.

In the strongest terms, I urge the minister and the Premier to commit this government to repair this stretch of the highway immediately.

1340

340

COLLÈGE BORÉAL

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): It was with great pleasure and pride that I attended and participated in the opening of Collège Boréal, a French-language college in my riding of Cochrane North, September 6, 1995. The project, an initiative of the NDP government, was years in the making and strongly supported by the francophone community.

The Collège Boréal has two campuses, one in Hearst and one in Kapuskasing, both providing a curriculum in business, technology, applied arts, health, human and environmental sciences, and professional and community services.

Francophones in the north have long needed facilities like Collège Boréal to provide them with continuing education opportunities. Francophone students in the north will now be able to study in French without leaving their communities.

Collège Boréal will also stimulate the economy in the north. The availability of skills development and training opportunities in French for workers means that francophones will be able to participate more fully in the economic development of the region.

Francophones from both Kapuskasing and Hearst, and from all areas in the north, continue to show and prove to the rest of the province that they are indeed a strong and vibrant community whose contribution to social, cultural, economic and political life is not only undeniable and enduring, but also necessary for the future development of Ontario as a whole.

I would like to congratulate the people of Kapuskasing and Hearst for their support of this project and their fine work over the years to bring these two campuses into being. I wish them every success for the future.

NORFOLK COUNTY FAIR

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): Mr Speaker, congratulations on your new position.

I rise today to recognize the opening of the 155th Norfolk County Fair, to be held tomorrow, October 3, and to run all week. The opening ceremonies also mark the 200th anniversary of the founding of the town of Simcoe, a town that's been home to my mother's family for over 200 years. Simcoe was founded in 1795 by General John Graves Simcoe, first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

The Norfolk County Fair celebrates a vibrant agricultural community in my riding. It's the largest class A fair in Ontario. It receives up to 170,000 visitors and is well known for its tobacco show, cattle show and horse show. I'll be presenting my grandfather's trophy on Saturday for best overall breed of Southdown sheep.

The fair does not stop with agriculture. There's a Warriors' Day parade and a flypast of Second World War B-25 bombers.

The fair, thanks to the hard work of many volunteers, is a credit to the Norfolk Agricultural Society, which was founded in 1840. As we recognize in the speech from the throne, Ontarians are a generous people. The residents of the rich riding of Norfolk, through events such as the Norfolk fair, are celebrating the very community spirit and family values that make Ontario work.

As the parliamentary assistant to our Premier leads our government's initiative to encourage volunteerism, I wish to commend all volunteers who made this fair possible.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Speaker, I too would like to add my congratulations to you on your election to this most honoured position, and I wish you well in your term.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy may not think that septic tanks are a very serious or important question, but they have become very expensive. As of April 1, 1995, regulation 358/90, Class N Septic Systems, is having a very negative impact on rural building costs.

The regulation has increased the required ground area for subsurface sewage disposal from 560 square metres to 2,500 square metres. The fully raised septic system not only proves to be too large an area for most lots but has increased the cost of development by \$20,000 per building lot. A partially raised tile bed system has worked successfully since 1989 and I think should be allowed to continue.

The current regulation was originally drafted 22 years ago. The minister has replied to my request and that of my colleague Pat Hoy that, "It is not the ministry's intent

to penalize rural communities for their use of partially raised septic systems," but that is exactly what's happening. This decision appears to conflict with OMAFRA guidelines as well.

I suggest that we return to the pre-1995 status and approve partially raised systems and, in the meantime, direct Environment officials to access their use further. Minister, we ask that you reverse this punitive decision.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Last week, the Minister of Labour refused to promise to protect health and safety inspectors from major cutbacks. Instead, she hid behind a review panel she has set up to pick up the pieces now that she's moved to eliminate the Workplace Health and Safety Agency.

The minister will know very well that her review has little credibility with workers in Ontario. The Ontario Federation of Labour took a look at this review and said, "The deck is stacked against workers from the outset." They refuse to have anything to do with it, and who can blame them?

Recently, we learned that the Labour ministry has already proposed cutting 20% of the province's health and safety inspectors, the men and women we count on to enforce health and safety laws. When you put this together with the decision to dismantle the agency that helped train tens of thousands of workers and managers in health and safety, you can see that this government has moved at breakneck speed to tear down the protections workers rely on.

Then in the throne speech we hear that ensuring safety in the workplace is supposedly a government priority. This simply isn't being straight with this House, nor is it being straight with the people of Ontario.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Ms Barb Fisher (Bruce): October is Women's History Month in Canada, and Women's History Month is a time when we acknowledge and celebrate the achievements women have made in all areas and endeavours. Far too often in our history, women's accomplishments and our roles in events of significance have been downplayed and overlooked.

The goal of Women's History Month is to write women back into the history of Canada. The theme of this fourth Women's History Month is Leaders, Scholars, Mentors: the History of Women and Education.

According to a Statistics Canada report released last year, education is the launching pad for women's ascent in the job market. Education is the greatest tool women can employ to ensure their economic independence, and economically speaking what is good for the women of Ontario is good for the province as a whole.

Economic prosperity for women can only be achieved if we eliminate gender-based bias from our education system. It is imperative that girls and boys be educated in an atmosphere of mutual respect and equal opportunity.

Women's History Month is a time to celebrate women's accomplishments. It is also a time for looking ahead and planning for the accomplishments of the future.

ANNUAL REPORT, COMMISSION ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I beg to inform the House that on Wednesday, June 21, the annual report of the Commission on Conflict of Interest for the period April 1, 1994, to March 31, 1995, was tabled.

ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I also beg to inform the House that on Wednesday, June 21, 1995, the annual report of the Ombudsman for the period April 1, 1994, to March 31, 1995, was tabled.

ANNUAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I also beg to inform the House that on Tuesday, August 15, 1995, the annual report from the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario for the period January 1, 1994, to December 31, 1994, was tabled.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FRAUD HOTLINE

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): Welfare fraud is a problem that hurts the most vulnerable people in our society. Every cent that is paid to the wrong person through fraud is help taken from the needy.

Experience shows that hotlines are an effective way to ensure that does not happen. Manitoba's fraud hotline saved over \$2 million—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Tax fraud: Have you thought about that?

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for St Catharines is out of order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: —in its first year of operation. Ontario has found that fraud hotlines help to ensure that money is not going to the wrong people and being taken from those who truly need our help. Sault Ste Marie saved over \$120,000 in six months. A fraud hotline has also been very successful in uncovering welfare fraud in Metropolitan Toronto. Statistics reveal that over 50% of the allegations investigated during the first seven months of this year were confirmed true.

Today I am announcing the introduction of a toll-free, province-wide hotline. People can help us combat fraud by calling 1-800-394-STOP.

It's estimated that Ontario's hotline and fraud prevention team will save \$25 million in the first full year.

I would like to invite the people of Ontario to use this hotline to stop fraud and to protect the system for people who really need help.

1350

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I am pleased to mark AIDS Awareness Week 1995 in the Ontario Legislature today. The theme this year is AIDS and homophobia.

This theme talks about courage, the courage of people living with HIV and AIDS, the courage of partners, fam-

ilies and friends of people living with HIV, the courage of people providing care to people living with HIV and the courage of all kinds of people to insist on safer sex methods.

The theme also talks about discrimination. This disease places a burden on the daily lives of those affected. The burden is increased by the stigma often attached to having HIV.

While it is true that attitudes towards people living with HIV are improving, some people with HIV, their partners, families and friends, still live in a society that is sometimes not supportive. They often do not receive the same care and concern as people suffering from other life-threatening illnesses.

This is my first public statement as Minister of Health on HIV and AIDS. I want to be clear. I want my position and the position of this government to be understood on this day.

We recognize that no one is immune to this disease. All of us have friends or family members who have been touched by the tragedy of AIDS. It does not matter which side of the House we sit on. It does not matter what political stripe we wear. It does not matter where we come from. We can all be touched by this disease.

AIDS is a priority for my ministry and it is a priority for this government. Our work will build on what Ontarians have already achieved. Ontario can be very proud of the network of services now available. The people of Ontario provide education to prevent HIV infection. They offer support and treatment for those who are infected. They offer support for caregivers.

Ontario can be proud of the commitment of thousands of workers and volunteers who work day in and day out to stem this disease. The people of Ontario have been and will always be our province's greatest strength.

The work we proceed with now must take into account the changing face of this terrible epidemic. People with HIV are living longer. They are developing a wider range of social needs. These include ongoing counselling and support. Many do not have disability insurance. The partners, families and friends of infected people have ongoing social needs such as counselling, support and respite care.

In the haemophilia community, where there is no longer the threat of new infections, the single greatest need is for support. Families need help coping with the progress of the disease and with rebuilding relationships.

It goes without saying that we want to prevent new cases of this disease as well as care for those who already have it. The supportive environments I'm talking about are an integral part of HIV prevention. They promote the knowledge and skills to encourage healthy lifestyles. These, then, are our three chief areas of work: prevention, education and care.

We have already begun to work with community groups and my ministry's AIDS bureau. I have met with the Ontario AIDS Network and I look forward to meeting with other groups.

We want community groups and others to work with us to identify priority areas in HIV education and prevention and treatment and support of people living with HIV.

I also want to emphasize the important role of the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS. It has a long history of serving ministers of health. I am committed to the renewal of this group of advisors, consisting of people directly affected by AIDS, health care professionals and community-based workers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Alex Klein and Mr Michael Sobota. They have ably chaired the committee over the past four years. Their contributions were many and well respected in the community and I very much, on behalf of former ministers of Health and governments, appreciate their commitment.

Today I'm pleased to announce two new co-chairs for the advisory committee. Dr Anne Phillips has been involved in a variety of HIV activities for over a decade, including work at major Toronto hospitals. She has also served as an assistant professor at the University of Toronto in the departments of microbiology and medicine since the mid-1980s. Dr Phillips's dedication, enthusiasm and leadership have been recognized with the Vanier Award for outstanding young Canadians and through awards of excellence from the Toronto Hospital.

The second new co-chair is David Kelley. Mr Kelley has been the executive director of the Toronto PWA Foundation. He has served on the board of the AIDS Committee of Toronto and been a project officer with my ministry's AIDS bureau. Mr Kelley has also worked for the Ministry of Community and Social Services and in mental health centres for children in Ottawa and Toronto. As a public speaker, Mr Kelley has over 500 addresses to his credit on topics such as gay youth and being HIV-positive.

We anticipate that the advisory committee will continue as a productive body. Together we will continue responding to HIV issues. These include identifying priority areas for HIV funding and government reinvestment.

I also want to affirm Ontario's commitment to working with the federal government to ensure that there is a national AIDS strategy in place. Members will know that the federal government is having some discussions right now that concern us about the future of the national AIDS strategy.

Mr Speaker, I'm saddened to tell you that this summer we lost two of our valued working partners to AIDS. Brian Farlinger and Alan Cornwall were well-respected activists. They were leaders in advocating for a more responsive health care system to meet the needs of people living with HIV. They gave of themselves. They had the courage to be open about their disease. They are very much missed by their families, friends and loved ones and the people of Ontario, in whose lives they made a tremendous difference.

It is the concern of this government that there is a great deal yet to be done to support people with HIV, their partners, families and friends. It should be the concern of all of us. Our concern can be shown today and throughout this week by wearing the red ribbon that is symbolic of AIDS awareness. Part of our work together

as Ontarians must be to build compassion and caring for others. These are very priceless commodities. We must seek in our hearts to give these commodities freely. Without reservation we must give these commodities our time and our best thoughts day in and day out.

Ontario is a great province. Its people have built an enviable society. During AIDS Awareness Week let us all demonstrate the very best in ourselves and bring out the best in others and show our support for this terribly important week in the history of our lives together.

FRAUD HOTLINE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): First of all, I'd like to congratulate the Minister of Community and Social Services for his election and for his appointment to the cabinet.

I would state from the beginning that every single one of us on either side of the House wants to stop welfare fraud. We surely believe it's a problem; it's a problem that needs to be addressed. However, I've got to remind this government that the election is over, that the time for bumper-sticker solutions is over. We had a 1-800 for our Common Sense Revolution. We had a 1-800 number for the throne speech. We're now going to have a 1-800 number for fraud in Ontario.

I would hope that the government takes the same initiative and the same drive now in introducing 1-800 numbers for business fraud in this province, income tax fraud in this province, the type of fraud that is put on the people of Ontario by the rich and powerful, rather than continuing to go after people who are vulnerable and need help in this province.

What has been announced today is already there. Most municipalities have fraud hotlines. It is a quick-fix solution, it's an easy solution, and it's one that doesn't take any work, any creativity, but doesn't address the real issue of fraud in Ontario. The snitch line doesn't help the majority of fraud that occurs as a result of duplicate IDs, duplicate addresses, phoney bank accounts. Those are the real issues in fraud in Ontario. This does none of that.

You could have introduced ID cards that would have been mandatory to be shown and not duplicated. That isn't done right now. You could have introduced direct bank deposits, Mr Minister; you failed to do so. You could have introduced direct payment to landlords; you failed to do so. The initiatives are there, the ideas are there, but this government is not serious about addressing welfare fraud; what it's serious about addressing is feelgood, bumper-sticker solutions that are already in place in most places.

1400

Let me tell you that the fraud that has been committed has been committed by this government upon the 17,000 seniors and disabled that you cut as of Sunday, people you promised to protect during the election, people you said were not going to be cut; 17,000 individuals as of today who are seniors and disabled and cannot work and earn it back have been cut by 22%. That is the fraud that is occurring here, not the fraud that the minister is talking about.

I would ask this government to get on with the real job

of welfare reform, to get on with the real job of going after fraud and to do it properly, not with feel-good, bumper-sticker solutions where we can pound our chests and say we're doing something about it. Stop pitting neighbours against neighbours, families against families. Introduce some real initiatives, have some guts and courage to make the real decisions and stop your continuous assault every day on welfare recipients in this province.

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): To the Minister of Health I would say that AIDS Awareness Week is a very important time. We share the concern about those who are living with AIDS and the families who are supporting them. We share the need for a national strategy, but I want to caution the minister that I agree that Ontario has shown leadership in the past and that a national strategy not mean that there be in any way a reduction in services to those people living with AIDS and the families supporting them.

The reason I have that concern is that we know there is a continuum of care that is required. There is inpatient, outpatient ambulatory services; there is a need for community-based services, drugs, respite care and psychosocial services. Ontario today is providing many services that are in short supply and in fact frequently not available in other provinces in this country. So I would remind the minister that if AIDS is a priority for your ministry you will see that those services are there. Given your \$33-million cut in community support home care, I would say to you that AIDS and HIV patients and individuals need those kinds of home support services. So we'll be watching when you say that AIDS is a priority for your ministry.

I too would like to congratulate all of those who have served on the AIDS advisory committee and the able chairs who have now stepped down. Dr Anne Phillips and David Kelley are excellent choices to co-chair the AIDS advisory committee. You neglected to mention that Dr Anne Phillips is on staff at the Wellesley Hospital. I'm sure that both she and David Kelley will tell you of the need for inpatient services and the continuum of care from inpatient to outpatient to community-based services. I make that point because you've just been handed a document which suggests that the Wellesley Hospital cease to provide inpatient services. So I'm just alerting you to what you will probably be hearing from the AIDS advisory committee, and we'll be watching very closely your commitment to provide education, prevention and care. Minister, the words that you have said today in this House are important words, but talk is cheap.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The time for oral questions—oh, sorry, the member for Nickel Belt.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your consideration. I must say that I could echo and indeed applaud much of what was in the minister's statement about AIDS Awareness Week. Particularly I like the theme of the awareness week being that of AIDS and homophobia and the tribute he makes to the courage of people who suffer from this disease and the people around them and people who provide care as

well. That is an important tribute to make.

I must say, though, that I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that people out there in the province of Ontario are very concerned about statements that are made by you and by other members of your government when they're not acted upon. There have been a lot of pious professions of support for the health community at large, and it's not being delivered. So you can say all you like about the importance of this week and your commitment to the treatment and prevention of AIDS, but as they say, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. There have been enough promises broken in your commitment to health care already that you will pardon us all if we tell you that we'll wait and see, but that does not take away from the importance of the work that's going on in this community and we do encourage those people who help make AIDS Awareness Week possible, and in particular the caregivers and indeed the advisory committee. It is terribly important work that they do.

FRAUD HOTLINE

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I'd like to respond to the statement by the Minister of Community and Social Services.

First of all, I'd like to say there's nobody in this Legislature in any of the political parties who supports fraud in our welfare system. We'd all like to see, not just in the welfare system but in every program that government runs, that there be no one who ever takes advantage of those programs. So it's a little annoying to those of us in my party when the government plays this issue in the way it does, and it plays it for one reason. It plays it for every political point that it can score, even if the impression that they're giving everyone is completely and totally inaccurate.

I would expect more from the Minister of Community and Social Services, but then, when I've heard him speak in the last few weeks, I never thought in the time that I've been in the Legislature that I would say there is a minister who is more out of touch and more backward than Jim Taylor when he was the Minister of Community and Social Services. If the minister doesn't know who that is, take a look at some of the things he said when he was minister. He was considered by people in the field to be the most regressive, out-of-touch Minister of Community and Social Services in years. You've achieved that and more, and you've done that by things you've said in the last couple of weeks.

You have, by the statements you've made, I think, ridiculed the position which you hold. When you say things to people like, "Yes, go out and find tuna at 69 cents a can, and buy in bulk," and then a couple of weeks later cut the welfare payments in this province by \$1 billion—and you know, or you should know if you were in touch, that people on welfare can't buy in bulk. They couldn't do it before the cuts; they can't do it at all after the cuts. Then you make these patronizing comments like, "Buy in bulk; buy dented cans." What right do you have as Minister of Community and Social Services, in a free and democratic society, to tell people what kind of food they should buy in this province? This is still a free society.

Then the most outrageous statement that I've heard

from a cabinet minister in the 18 years I've been here, and that was, "If they can't feed their kids, then the children's aid will move in and take their kids away." That was the most ridiculous statement I have ever heard—

Interjection: Talk about uncaring.

Mr Cooke: Uncaring. But it does recognize one thing: that the policies you've implemented on social assistance are victimizing 500,000 children in this province. Why don't you get on with trying to take care of the people who need compassion instead of victimizing them further?

The fact is, the only fraud taking place in this province today—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member's time has expired.

Mr Cooke: —is the statement by the Minister of Community and Social Services.

ORAL QUESTIONS REVIEW OF HOSPITALS

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Premier. Premier, you will be very well aware that the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council released its report on hospital restructuring on Friday. You will also be aware that the report calls for sweeping changes to Toronto's hospital system, including the closure or merger of 12 hospitals.

I seem to recall, Premier, that during the election campaign you said that you had no plan for closing hospitals. I ask, are you prepared to stand here today and repeat those words, that you have no plan to close hospitals?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I had no plans during the campaign to close hospitals, but the former government and Premier funded a study to be done by others on whether they felt they could more effectively deliver health care services. That study has been now, I guess, an interim report, delivered to the district health council of Metropolitan Toronto. It's not my study, it's not the government's study, it's not Minister Wilson's study, and it's not been completed yet.

1410

We're interested in hearing what others have to say on delivering services more efficiently, including, indeed, what the leader of the official opposition has to say. Should we carry on with the status quo? Should we look at the \$5-million study funded by the former government when it finally comes to us?

These will be very difficult decisions that we will all have to deal with. If the minister has specifics with regard to the study, I'm sure the Minister of Health would be able to respond to some of those. I'll await the supplementary to see.

Mrs McLeod: You won the election; we accept that. You now have the responsibility of managing the health care system in this province. I'm talking about your plans. You're clearly not prepared to say what you were prepared to say during the election campaign, that you have now no plans to close hospitals. Nevertheless, Premier, you are left with the responsibility, your respon-

sibility, your government's responsibility, of ensuring that people in this province have access to the health care that they need.

That particular report that has been presented calls for up to 12 hospitals to close, up to 29 operating rooms to be shut down and the loss of over 1,500 beds. Again, I say it is your responsibility to ensure access to health care in this province. I ask you, do you yourself believe that the loss of 12 hospitals, 29 operating rooms and 1,500 beds constitutes a loss of health care, a reduction in health care service? What responsibility are you prepared to take to make sure that access to health care is maintained here in Toronto and across this province?

Hon Mr Harris: I haven't personally seen the study. The Minister of Health, I think, may have seen an interim report, but it's not a study for the government at this point in time, it's for the health council, and if the minister has further comments, he can make them.

Mrs McLeod: I say to the Premier, as he attempts to simply move this to someone else's responsibility, that he has a very direct responsibility, again, not just to provide health care, to make sure that the health care is provided, but to do that by ensuring that there is funding for health care in this province.

The fact of the matter is that as this study and other studies for restructuring hospitals are taking place in this province, the hospitals simply don't know what their funding is going to be. They hear rumours that you may be looking at cuts to hospital funding of up to 20%.

There is no question—you'll get no disagreement from anyone—that hospitals are going to have to find ways to save money. That is the reality they're facing. They're going to have to look at innovative approaches if they're going to be able to maintain the levels of health care that people need. But they can't do the kind of planning that's required if they don't know what their funding levels are going to be.

It is your responsibility to introduce some predictability, some stability to the system so that hospital administrators, district health councils and others involved can get on with the planning work they need to do. They need to know what their funding will be. I ask you today, will you commit that hospital funding will not be cut when you announce the 1996 transfer payments?

Hon Mr Harris: Let me, by way of response, say to the leader of the official opposition that we have committed to follow up on the work of previous ministers of Health, from both your party and from the New Democratic Party, to try to find more efficient ways to spend this health care envelope, which currently—or at least our commitment was at \$17.4 billion. It's hard to find from day to day where it's at, but that certainly was our commitment.

We're very clear, I might say to the leader of the official opposition, that to be able to do this over the life of this government and through our mandate, through a period of five years, would be very, very difficult. In fact, when we talked about maintaining the commitment, I was one who felt that over a period of five years the challenge was to keep it from ballooning way beyond \$17.4

billion, not to keep it under, and yet most of the questions seem to be related that way.

Clearly, to keep it from ballooning way beyond control for the taxpayer to fund—we're currently close to \$9 billion in deficit this year, as I believe the member is aware—we're going to have to find significant operational savings through all delivery of health care, including the hospitals. We would want to consult with the hospitals before rushing out making transfer payment announcements. We will consult, and we'd be interested in your views as well, as we make very difficult decisions over the next period of time.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question.

Mrs McLeod: It's completely irresponsible for this Premier to suggest that at any previous time—

The Speaker: Is this a new question?

Mrs McLeod: —hospitals have faced the threat of that kind of a cut—

The Speaker: The leader is out of order. Is this a new question?

Mrs McLeod: —with no budget, nothing to indicate what this government is actually going to do.

The Speaker: The leader of the official opposition is out of order. Have you got another question?

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I do have a second question, Mr Speaker; it is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The largest food bank in Ontario, the Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto, has kicked off its annual Thanksgiving food drive. It seems rather ironical that the kickoff of their food drive coincides with your government's cut in welfare benefits. Clearly, the organizers of the food drive this year are concerned that the cuts to welfare benefits are going to lead to increased demand for the food banks. I can't help but feel that it's no coincidence that the food bank's goal of increasing their donations by 20% mirrors the 21% decrease in welfare benefits that you introduced yesterday.

The throne speech stated that it wanted to encourage more volunteerism in Ontario, and I think it's clear what that means. It means that your government's vision for Ontario means slashing welfare benefits and leaving it up to volunteer food banks to make up the difference.

I ask you, Minister, is it your expectation that food banks and other charitable agencies are going to make up for the cuts that your government is imposing?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): First of all, I'd like to take the opportunity to remind the Leader of the Opposition once again that welfare expenditures have soared 310% over the last 10 years. Secondly, prior to any rate cut, the rates were 35% above the rest of the provinces. I must say that in addition to all this, this government inherited a very, very difficult fiscal situation from the prior government.

With respect to the food bank, I might refer the Leader of the Opposition to the food bank in Ottawa where at least the gentleman there, whose name is Greg Joy, indicated he was going to have to wait and see exactly what the situation was going to be with the food banks rather than anticipate and be like Chicken Little.

I want to take one more opportunity to also remind the Leader of the Opposition that there is a provision for earning back the difference between the old rate and the new rate.

Mrs McLeod: I thought at least the minister would acknowledge the fact that surely we all agree that volunteer food banks are not the answer to the problems of people on welfare. The minister, at least in the past, has acknowledged that the answer for people on welfare is to be able to find jobs. In fact, he urged them last week to find a job by Sunday. I don't think many people actually found a job by Sunday because the jobs simply weren't there to find.

In the meantime, this minister continues to refuse to understand any of the impact that those welfare cuts are going to have on people and particularly on the need for families to feed and to shelter their children. Obviously there are families today which find themselves locked into leases for their apartments which require them to pay a certain amount in rent per month. Their welfare cheques have gone down, but the landlord still wants his money.

We've heard the advice the minister has had to offer to deal with hungry children in the past. We've heard him talk about buying tuna in bulk and buying tins of spaghetti. I wonder, Minister, whether you have any advice at all for real people in a real world. How do you think parents are supposed to feed their children when their rent is the same and their welfare cheques have now been reduced by hundreds of dollars?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: First of all, I would like to remind the Leader of the Opposition once again, as we mentioned last time we convened, that there's been at least three months' notice in terms of the rate cut. I would also like to remind the leader once again that the rates are now 10% above the average of the other provinces.

1420

Now, with respect to the comment about rents—

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): Don't you care for the people?

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Oriole is out of order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: —I have here a letter, Mr Speaker, I'd like to refer you to. There's a gentleman in Kitchener who says that he owns a 47-suite apartment building. He indicates that three of his tenants are on mother's allowance or some other form of welfare. Two weeks ago, the tenants received a letter from the local social assistance office informing them that the current rate they're paying will be too high under the new benefit structure. They were told to find more reasonable accommodations.

This gentleman writes that he is pleased to report to me that all three tenants decided to seek employment to supplement the reduced benefit and stay in their apartments. Two of them have already found employment and the third tenant thinks a job offer is imminent. Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Scarborough North is out of order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: This gentleman is indicative of people across the province of Ontario, who also would like to say that this is great news for the tenants as well as for the Ontario government. The financial burden on Ontario is reduced, and he feels that this will send these people on the road to self-sufficiency.

Mrs McLeod: Since the minister seems that he wants to remind us of things, I would remind him that it is not three people who are on welfare or unemployment looking for work in the province of Ontario, it is 515,000 people who are unemployed and who are looking for work. They cannot simply go out and get their affairs in order when there are not jobs for those 515,000 people to find, and some of those people have been looking for work for three years and more.

Minister, you also remind us in each response that your government has said that anybody who is able to find a job can earn back the benefits that have been cut. Minister, I say to you today that that commitment—indeed a commitment—was made in the Common Sense Revolution, it was made again in the throne speech, you have said it again today, and that is simply not the case.

According to your own rules, Minister, for example, a couple with two children can earn only up to \$200 before the benefits begin to be clawed back. They cannot make up the full amount you have cut. So even if people on welfare are able to get a job, they can't possibly recover what they have lost.

Will you correct your previous statements, will you correct the statements and the commitments made in the Common Sense Revolution and in the speech from the throne and acknowledge that your rules will not allow people on welfare to earn back the full amount that you have slashed from welfare benefits?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'd like to indicate of course that our statements have been that people can earn back the difference between the old base rate and the new base rate. So as far as I'm concerned, I would certainly invite the Leader of the Opposition to provide me with further information in terms of how she has arrived at that interesting figure.

Secondly, I'd like to indicate as well that under this program, aside from the basic exemption that people are allowed to have to earn back what this cut has taken away, they're also entitled to keep, after that, 25% of money they earn past that basic exemption. In other words, they can be rewarded for initiative, for working hard and working past just the bare minimum needed to earn back that money.

The Speaker: New question, leader of the third party. Mr Bob Rae (York South): A question for the same minister: I just spoke earlier today to a young woman by the name of Andrea. She's asked that her last name not be used. She has two learning-disabled children plus another child. Her benefits have been cut by some over \$300 and her rent has not been cut by a similar amount. She lives in Durham, where the children's aid society has

been advising her and others like her that the services that they had previously provided to her and to her children—they both have an auditory disorder—will be cut off.

I want to ask the minister, because he put so much emphasis on people getting out and finding the job, and then he puts all the emphasis, saying if you can't find a job then get the children's aid society—and I see that the minister is now being prompted by the Premier. It's hard to tell who Edgar Bergen is and who's Charlie McCarthy, but I'm going to go directly to the minister again and say to the minister, he's the one who said the children's aid society is now going to have an additional role of policing and stepping in. That's what he says. And out in the field we find that the children's aid societies are cutting. They're cutting because they've been subject to this indiscriminate, mindless cut that's now taken hold on the other side.

I want to ask the minister, what's his advice for Andrea with respect to her needs for her children?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It's interesting that I'm being criticized for repeating myself. However, it's interesting that leaders of the opposition are interested in repeating their questions.

First of all, I would like to once again remind the leader of the third party that, with respect to that statement, I suggested that we're not talking about poverty; we were talking about the situation of protection. We're talking about a situation where if a child was in danger or in need of protection, would that be a situation where the CAS would drop in.

Interjection: —need of food?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: That was not an indication of food or poverty or anything.

With respect, this government provides special services at home, which is probably what the leader of the third party is talking about. I invite the leader of the third party, if he's talking about services that are being so-called cut off to someone specifically, to give me the details of that and we'll look into it, certainly. But our commitment was, with respect to any rate cuts, that we were not going to cut any payments to the disabled.

Mr Rae: No, you cut the payments to learning-disabled kids. That's who you cut. They're members of the same family. That's who you cut. Wake up over there. That's what you're doing.

The minister made an interesting statement. I'd like to ask him directly about it. He said in his statement in his earlier quotation—and maybe he's going through the ritual of saying he was misquoted; would that others of us had the same defence. I would simply like to ask the minister this: Is he saying today in the House that the creation of poverty, which apparently is a deliberate policy of his government, now that they've cut the payments as much as they have, does not, if he'll answer the question, put children at risk? Is he saying that?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm sounding like a record, I know, but I would like to remind the leader of the third party again that we have made provision for people to earn back whatever the cut took away. Therefore, I be-

lieve the leader of the third party's question is irrelevant.

Mr Rae: I would now like to ask, by means of final supplementary, since the minister has said that poverty is apparently irrelevant to the minister—an interesting view of his jurisdiction. I also spoke earlier today with Mr Maloney, who is, as you will know, the executive director of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto, and I asked him to tell me where he thought the major problems would be as a result of these cuts.

He said that his main concern was with respect to those folks who had some psychological disabilities that would not at the moment qualify them for any kind of disability payment. They had children, they needed help and intervention all the time of a positive and constructive sort, and he thought that the resources of the society were just going to be taken over the top by virtue of the cuts that have taken place to children's aid.

Can the minister explain to me the logic of cutting children's aid and cutting the amount of welfare at the same time, when he himself is the person who raised the role of children's aid in the context of the cuts he's just introduced?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: With respect to the leader of the third party's questions, I'd like to indicate first of all that when we made the transfer payment cut, which was 2.5% this year, it was necessary in order to address the impending fiscal responsibility.

Secondly, with respect to the question on disabilities, somehow you have to define "disability." We've clearly gone to a medical definition of "disability," and unfortunately that's what the catchment is going to be. The difficulty we've received from the former government in terms of the welfare situation is that definitions had no meaning to the prior government, that somehow there were no meanings that had—I mean, it was not meaningful at all.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Scarborough North is out of order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: You could somehow show up and therefore apply, regardless of what the standards may or may not be, and that was the question: may or may not be. We've clearly defined what "disability" is.

1430

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I have a new question for the Minister of Health. We'll all have a chance to study that particular set of answers, but a new question to the Minister of Health. It's my first opportunity to question the minister and to congratulate him on his appointment. He was certainly a very tough critic of the previous government, and I know he will expect similar fair treatment from members of the opposition parties with respect to our questions of him.

Minister, the statements that are made by you and by the Premier raise some quite basic questions about the kind of restructuring that's going to take place over the next five years.

Let me just state categorically for the record that

anyone who doesn't think restructuring needs to happen is sadly mistaken. We all recognize that. It's happening across the country, across North America and around the world, and you will find no resistance from me or from members of my party to the principle that restructuring needs to happen. I want to make that very clear.

Applause.

Mr Rae: Don't applaud too much; premature applause is not a good idea.

At the same time, Minister, I'd like to try to test the logic of what's taking place. You gave a speech on May 31 on health care, in which you said, "We will not condone the continued ratcheting down of the institutional sector until adequate supports are in place and a seamless continuum of care is guaranteed." Now, that costs money.

I'd like to ask the minister, can you explain to us why it is that this year you're planning to take more money out of the health care system than you're putting back into community care? Can you explain that to us?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I think I was complimented in there somewhere by the member for York South, and I certainly appreciate that.

It's a very good question. I appreciate your support for the concept of restructuring and I ask you to take a look at some of the proposals, some 26 or 27 now around the province, that are coming in. All of them talk about the need to beef up long-term-care, community-based services.

We're in complete agreement with that. I spoke about that in the past, of the need to beef up community-based services, and that's exactly the direction we're going before we'll tolerate any reduction on the institutional side.

Mr Rae: I find the answer interesting, because I think it reflects the logic that every government has had to listen to. We know that in the communities there's a willingness to accept restructuring where you have a commitment to making sure that the measures are in place to allow it to be humane.

You've cut funding for training, you've cut funding for adjustment, you've cut funding for birthing centres, you've cut funding for long-term care. You've taken out more money this year than you're putting back into community care.

My question is the same as the first time: Can you explain the logic? Given what you're saying—everyone agrees with it; everyone agrees more money's got to go into community care—my simple question is, why aren't you doing it?

Hon Mr Wilson: I appreciate the question and would say to the member for York South that in no way have we taken out more money. What we're doing is identifying savings in the system so that we can reinvest those savings down the road in areas of priority and need.

I repeat to the honourable member that long-term-care services, community-based services, are a priority of this government, and you will see those reinvestments as time goes on.

Mr Rae: I think we are seeing a transformation of a previous promise made by the Progressive Conservative

Party into a very different policy being carried out by the PC government. The PC government says that in 1999 that \$17.4 billion figure will be the same. The PC Party said, and Jim Wilson the Health critic said, that not a cent will be taken out of the health care system unless it's reinvested day after day, minute by minute, right back into the system.

So we have a major change, and I'm telling the minister it's going to haunt him, because you cannot effect the changes in Windsor or in Thunder Bay or in Sudbury or in Toronto, you cannot effect those changes, if you're taking out more money than you're putting back in.

Why cancel the birthing centres? Why take money away from health resource training? Why take money away from long-term care? Why have you taken money out of community care if you are so concerned with making sure this adjustment takes place? It doesn't make any sense.

Hon Mr Wilson: The facts of the matter are that when we wrote the Common Sense Revolution in May 1994, the health care budget was at \$17.4 billion. It was projected to stay at \$17.4 billion throughout the rest of the NDP term. We will fully protect that budget. During the process, though, we must identify savings and then reinvest those savings in the system.

I can say to the honourable member that I will be proud to stand here prior to the call of the next election in some four and a half or five years' time and indicate to you that the health care budget will be at \$17.4 billion and fully preserved at that time.

BUDGET

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Premier. The Premier will know that the most important financial document for the Legislature is the budget. That's the document that the Legislature relies on; that's the document the public relies on. Every year since Confederation, Ontario has had a budget. We understand, Premier, that this year you are planning to not present a budget. The last budget was in May 1994. We've been told you will not present a budget until next spring, May 1996. No budget. It relates to the question we just had here: How much are we spending on health care? How much money are we spending on the various programs? No budget. You are introducing sweeping changes and you refuse to present a budget to the Legislature.

My question to you, Premier, is this, because you've made this decision that we in the Liberal caucus find unacceptable: Recognizing that the people of Ontario have a right to see from you the full fiscal picture in a budget—not in some financial statement; in a budget—will you today commit to present to the people of Ontario a budget that will outline clearly your government's fiscal plans? Not a financial statement, but a budget as we've seen every year since Confederation.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Let me congratulate the member for Scarborough-Agincourt on his reelection.

He indicated in his question that the Legislature relies on a budget and the people of Ontario rely on a budget to get their information. I rely on the Minister of Finance to answer those questions.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): The member knows full well he wrote me a letter on September 20 with respect to this matter. I gave him a reply on September 28. I presume he has that reply.

Mr Phillips: The people of Ontario should know the reply, and the reply is that we are not getting a budget, for the first time in the history of the province.

I will say this government is ramming through its agenda, and you've got a majority and you can do it. You can ram through your agenda, you can ram through your Common Sense Revolution. But you have no right, no right at all, to gag the Legislature and to not have a budget for the Legislature and not give us an opportunity to debate your plans as you're putting them through.

This is an extremely important subject for the people of Ontario, and we find it unacceptable that we do not have a budget from this government. Yes, you sent us an answer saying you're not going to do it, but that is unacceptable. It's unacceptable.

Hon Mr Eves: That's not all it said. Read the rest of the answer.

Mr Phillips: What the minister said is that we will have a financial statement but no budget, no debate on a budget. I think even the supporters of the Common Sense Revolution are probably shaking their heads right now saying: "Why will they not present a budget? Why can't we have a budget presented so we understand exactly where you're going?"

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Mr Phillips: For the first time in the history of this province, no budget, no debate, no opportunity for you to lay out before the Legislature and the people of Ontario where you're going. I say once again to you, Minister, what possible justification have you for not presenting a budget to the people of Ontario? Answer that question.

1440

Hon Mr Eves: Mr Speaker, through you to the member: The honourable member knows very well that Ontarians are entitled to open and factual and realistic financial reporting. Talking about the first time in the history of the province, for the first time in the history of the province we have asked an Ontario Financial Review Commission to report back on open practices.

The member will also know that the previous Minister of Finance introduced his economic plan for this province on April 27 of this year. The member will also know that on July 21 of this year we issued a fiscal economic update.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Scarborough North is out of order.

Hon Mr Eves: I know you haven't had your lunch yet, but just relax over there. The member will also know that we are committed to issuing a financial statement this November—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: Just a minute—which will have a lockup, which will fully detail and outline revenues, expenditures, borrowing. They will have all kinds of advance notice. There will be a lockup. There will be estimates tabled in this session of the Legislature. They know all of that. He's going to get all the information he wants. He will have three fiscal statements this year, not one. I do not understand what the honourable member's problem is.

JOB CREATION

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, and I'd like to congratulate him for his election and his appointment to cabinet, to a post which is to a considerable extent responsible for maintaining a positive climate for job creation and economic growth in this province.

I want to focus on the question of jobs for a moment. Up until we heard the throne speech last week, I believed, as I'm sure many others believed, that this government was committed, as they set out in their platform, to creating more than 725,000 new jobs over the next five years. So it was with more than a little surprise that, with all the words we saw in the throne speech with respect to jobs and job creation, there was no commitment made to the 725,000 jobs.

What I'd like to ask the minister, very simply, is this: When did his government abandon that objective?

Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism: Mr Speaker, before answering the question, I'd like to wish you well in your endeavours as Speaker of this chamber. I know you will acquit yourself so well, and we're very proud of you.

I'd also like to thank the honourable member for asking me that question. This is my first chance to stand in this Legislature, which has played such an important part in the history of Canada and in Ontario, and I thank him very much for giving me a chance to be part of this process.

We all want good jobs and secure employment for ourselves and for our children, and this government believes that the best way to create permanent jobs is by restoring a healthy and friendly employment climate. And we're going to do this by lowering provincial personal income tax rates.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Hon Mr Saunderson: We're also going to balance the budget by reducing government spending, and that is a very important aspect of our plan.

And may I add that we are going to remove the barriers to job creation, investment and economic growth, and with that kind of policy, the jobs will be created. I'm very confident of that.

Mr Silipo: I have to say I'm even more perplexed than I was when I first stood up to ask the question, because here's a terrific opportunity for this minister to reiterate his government's commitment to the 725,000

jobs, and it wasn't there. I think it's a legitimate question, therefore, for us to ask ourselves what's happened to that commitment, particularly when we know that is the equivalent of 2,000 jobs a week for the next five years.

We know also, in the last couple of months since the Conservatives have formed the government, that in fact we've seen a loss of jobs in this province. Now they will, I'm sure, quickly rush to say, "That wasn't our doing, we simply took over," and I suppose to some extent they may have some ability to argue on that score.

But let's take a look at some of the actions this government has undertaken, which seem to contradict exactly the direction towards job creation. In the July 21 statement we saw the cancellation of project after project, initiative after initiative. I could go on listing, and I'm sure you won't let me get through all of them, but, Mr Speaker: the high performance computing centre, Jobs Ontario Community Action, the Ontario network infrastructure program—

The Speaker: Would you wind up your question, please.

Mr Silipo: —the sector partnership fund, particularly the Eglinton subway, a project which would have created 10,000 jobs immediately and some 35,000 jobs over a period of time.

The Speaker: And your question is?

Mr Silipo: My question is simply this: Where are the jobs? How does this government—

The Speaker: Will the member take his seat, please. The question has been asked.

Hon Mr Saunderson: I thought this hour was called question period, not speech period.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): It's certainly not answer period.

Hon Mr Saunderson: Oh, it's going to be answer time.

Since becoming minister, I have met with hundreds of businesses and 15 sector industry groups to determine how our government can best help them to grow and to create jobs. This government looks forward to working with all businesses and employers to restore jobs and opportunities in this province. I might add to the honourable member that since the summer began, this is a list of jobs that have been created in our province. And these are no small commitments to jobs; these are major companies that have now got confidence in our province since this government took power.

The Speaker: The question has been answered. The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale has the floor.

VICTIMS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): Mr Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues in all the House, I am sure, I'd like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker and give you every cooperation in carrying out this very difficult job.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Give it a rest.

Mr Hastings: How about over there giving it a rest? Last week in Ottawa there was a demonstration which clearly showed the need for a Victims' Bill of Rights in

Interjections.

Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Could we have order, please. The member has a question.

Mr Hastings: The public believes that there is an imbalance in the rights of the victims versus the rights of the accused. Certainly, many residents in my riding feel that the rights of the accused take precedence over the rights of the victims. The tragedies committed and illustrated through the Bernardo trial have heightened Ontario's awareness of this need and the people of Ontario have been demanding legislation in this regard. We have reiterated, as a government, through the throne speech that we would proceed with such legislation.

My question is to the Attorney General. Mr Minister, could you outline briefly how you will proceed with the implementation of this proposed Victims' Bill of Rights?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, with responsibility for Native Affairs): I'd like to thank the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale for a very important question, a question that the opposition may not think is important but victims in this province do think is important.

We've had a situation in this province for some time where it's become obvious that the rights of victims do not equate with the rights of accused people. Accordingly, we in this government wish to deliver to this Legislature a Victims' Bill of Rights that will create a balance, not take away rights from accused individuals, and provide rights to victims.

I'd like to tell you, Mr Speaker, and you're well aware of it, that the member for Burlington South has tried for many years to implement this kind of piece of legislation. We are indebted to him for the work that he has done.

The Speaker: Wind up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Harnick: We will be bringing in a Victims' Bill of Rights that we believe can restore a balance and make people believe that we have a justice system that respects not only the accused but the victim as well.

Mr Hastings: My supplementary to the Attorney General is in regard to the exercise of judicial restraint in the implementation of this bill. I would like him to inform the House as to how he proceeds with his ministry in the implementation of victims' impact statements and whether in fact the bill will contain a mandatory obligation on the part of judges, when they're sentencing those before them in their cases, so that a victim's impact statement is not just simply looked at but is actually essentially in the sentencing of those people before the judges at that time.

Hon Mr Harnick: The victim's impact statement is a very important aspect in the sentencing aspect in any criminal case. Some cases will indicate that a victim's impact statement, because of the nature of the case, is an extremely important aspect to the sentencing in that matter. We will have a Victims' Bill of Rights that will

set out what those obligations will be so that not just the judge or the crown attorney knows what the obligations are to a victim, but so that the victim knows, when he or she becomes involved in a case, that there will be an opportunity for that victim to advise the court about the impact of the event on his or her life.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr Speaker, let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Speaker. It's a well-deserved recognition of the balance, fairness and moderation which you will bring to the chair.

My question is for the Minister of Labour, and let me begin by congratulating her on her re-election and appointment to cabinet. Though we will no doubt differ, I anticipate full and fair debate on the issues that will occupy our attention in the days and weeks to come.

Minister, over the summer you have made a number of decisions that, in the words of the Common Sense Revolution, are supposed to "restore the balance between labour and management," and "cut government barriers to job creation, investment and economic growth." Like so much of that document, the rhetoric and reality do not add up. In fact, your government is deliberately pursuing a policy to alienate working people and swing the pendulum of labour-management relations back to where it was earlier this century.

Minister, if you turn back the clock on the law, workers in this province will respond accordingly. Given the climate that you've already created by effectively kicking sand in the face of working people, how do you plan to restore balance between labour and management and create growth in our economy?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): In response to the question from the member for Windsor-Walkerville, I would indicate to you that we did indicate during the election campaign and prior to the election campaign that we were interested in bringing jobs back to this province, jobs which are sorely needed for the people in this province.

We're also anxious to create new investment opportunities. We indicated at that time that we would restore the balance in labour relations, and in order to do that we are prepared to repeal Bill 40 and we are prepared to introduce into the workplace democracy measures, which for the first time will give all individuals the opportunity to be fully informed as to their rights and to make a choice by means of a secret ballot vote.

Mr Duncan: My supplementary is to the Minister of Labour. Surely, Minister, you don't believe that your government's deliberate and direct attack on working people in this province will go unanswered. You must realize that your government's extreme positions are creating polarization between workers and management. Your policies are creating severe instability, which in our view will lead to a decline in productivity, profit and investment.

Even Chrysler Corp warned you to slow down, restore balance and consult workers. The unfortunate violence in response which we witnessed here last week is not just the product of misguided protestors and overzealous security; it is the direct result of the mean-spirited and shortsighted policies being pursued by this government.

Given your get-a-job mentality towards the poor, will the minister now admit that your government's policies will harm Ontario's investment climate and cost this province badly needed jobs? What steps will the minister undertake to ensure that we don't witness an escalation in the type of violent response we saw last week, and how will you ensure that your policies—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question's been asked.

Mr Duncan: —don't completely undermine harmonious labour-management relations in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mrs Witmer: To the member for Windsor-Walkerville, I thought perhaps he was making his maiden speech in the House, as opposed to a question. However, I want to tell you that our government is personally very concerned about workers in this province. It's because of that concern that we are moving forward and ensuring that we will provide job creation policies and that there will be opportunity for all people.

Further to your comments regarding the Chrysler letter, I want to just indicate to you that Chrysler, as you know, and the CAW, have asked for a meeting and I am quite prepared to meet. As I have been doing with individuals, we want to make sure that as we move forward and make changes, we listen to the legitimate concerns that are being expressed. I will indicate to you one more time, as I've indicated to all of the individuals, whether employers or union leaders or employees, my door is open and I would be happy to respond to concerns at any time.

TRANSPORTATION FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): My question today is directed at my vis-à-vis opposite, the honourable Minister of Transportation. I have in my hand several letters. Those letters are from people who are physically challenged, people who are asking for a chance to be like you, to be like the others, for they have no alternative; people who use the Wheel-Trans system to try to find a job, at times to go to work, to attend a much-needed medical appointment.

They write to me because they're concerned about the systematic and deliberate cuts to what is for them a chance to be like the others, for a fistful of \$1.2 million their chance to do that, and at times their chance to dream has been taken away from them. Will you rescind this nonsensical move on the backs of the less fortunate?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): Although this government inherited a tremendous spending crisis, it was never this government's intention to cut Wheel-Trans. It was a decision that was made by the Toronto Transit Commission, not the Mike Harris government.

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Mr Pouliot: When you cut the oxygen, do you expect the patient to breathe? What you have here, sir, with this kind of answer, with respect, Minister, is the unspeakable. In pursuit of the most vulnerable of people who don't have a voice, \$1.2 million. Pass the hat around to your rich colleagues. What are we doing? Is this the human dimension? Some people run faster than others, and they leave the field behind. What about an egalitarian policy? What about quality of life? The essence of life, in this case. Do what's right, Mr Minister: rescind. You haven't made a mistake. Or, if you have, you will admit it and you will correct it. It's \$1.2 million, not the end of the world—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): What's your question?

Mr Pouliot: —so that people can wheel on board and have a chance to dream, have a chance to live. How can you, Minister, be so callous, be so heartless in the face of Kevin Greenfield, who wants to go to the library; Jonathan Howell, who wants to go to school?

The Speaker: Does the member have a question?

Mr Pouliot: The question is, will you do what's right, Minister?

Hon Mr Palladini: It was one thing that the Ministry of Transportation has done that has gone together with all the municipalities and all the operators that operate Wheel-Trans in this great province of ours, and it was the TTC only that chose to take that step. However, I am encouraged that it took the TTC only three months to come around and all of a sudden find a way to reinstate Wheel-Trans. This is something that I asked them to consider back in the middle of July and clearly is something that they could have done without cutting Wheel-Trans.

SPENDING REDUCTIONS

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): Mr Speaker, I would like to echo the comments of previous colleagues and congratulate you on your election to Speaker. You have an awesome responsibility.

To the Chair of Management Board, I would like to ask, what initiatives have you taken as Chair of Management Board to rebuild our government and make it smaller and more efficient?

Hon Dave Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Mr Speaker, I'll add my congratulations to you—I've had an earlier opportunity but unfortunately forgot—and my congratulations to the member for Hamilton West for her first opportunity to speak in this Legislature.

I must say that the member for Hamilton West is expressing concern, I believe, about an issue that is uppermost in the minds of all of the members in this Legislature. Indeed, when we took office in June we found that the projected deficit of the province of Ontario was \$10.6 billion. I think all of us in this House would agree that we could not let that happen. We did set about to reduce expenditures. We set about to reorganize the government, to look at how we could deliver the services to the people not only today but five years from now, 10 years from now. People are going to be expecting the services across the province of Ontario, and there is an onus on all of us in this Legislature to ensure that the funding is there.

Anticipating a supplementary, I'll say the first avenue that we took was to reduce spending by \$1.9 billion to reduce the deficit to \$8.7 billion.

Last week in the Legislature I announced, as the final component of that reduction, that the ministries, all ministries, have looked at all programs across the province of Ontario and have reported back a reduction of—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Come on, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question has been answered. Will the member take his seat, please.

Hon Dave Johnson: —over \$700 million. That's the start of the restructuring and the downsizing of the government.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mrs Ross: I do have a supplementary: How do the operating reduction targets announced Thursday fit into the overall planning? Can you assure me that the cuts will apply evenly across the province and that Hamilton will not be singled out, as many critics have alleged it will be?

Hon Dave Johnson: I've had the opportunity to talk to the member for Hamilton West on other occasions and I know that she is fighting hard for the people of Hamilton West. I commend her for that, and I expect that all members of this Legislature will do that.

There will be reductions that will affect the Hamilton area. There will be reductions that will affect Metropolitan Toronto. There will be reductions which will affect all components of Ontario because this is a problem that if we can find the solution to it, if we can balance the books, if we can bring the expenditures in line with the revenue of the province of Ontario, then it will be of benefit to all of the people of Ontario. Consequently, the reductions will apply as well to all of the people of the province of Ontario, and it will certainly be my intent that we look at all programs all across Ontario.

I might say that it will also involve a review of agencies, boards and commissions. It will involve a review of the structure of the province of Ontario. Of course, we'll be looking at involving the private sector as well.

The Speaker: The question has been answered. Will the member take his seat.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I would like to congratulate Mr Palladini for being elected in York Centre, and also for being appointed to cabinet. I wish him the best of luck. I know how difficult his job is going to be.

My question relates to flying truck tires. As you know, in the last few days there was another incident near St Catharines where flying truck tires hit a motor vehicle. Fortunately, no one was killed. Today is the beginning of an inquest into two unfortunate, tragic deaths that occurred as a result of flying truck tires earlier this year.

Early in the summer you stated categorically that you were going to act quickly and urgently to respond to this danger on Ontario highways, that you were going to come up with a comprehensive road safety plan. The question I have for you is: Where is this comprehensive road safety plan?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): Thank you very much for the question. I am personally

very much committed to improving truck safety in this province of ours. We have just completed a thorough study on how we can implement some changes to make sure that safety on our highways will be maintained and we are in the process of finalizing it.

My colleague across the room, I would like to reassure him once again that this government and this minister are committed to making our highways very safe, and things will be done accordingly.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): We have a visitor in the gallery today from Alberta, the Honourable Gary Mar.

1510

PETITIONSHOMOLKA CASE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials and employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, in particular circumstances of the negotiation of the pleabargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

This is signed by a large number of people in the Niagara Peninsula.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTING LICENCES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Mr Speaker, I would also like to congratulate you on your election. I'm sure that it's because of the excellent work you've been doing prior to the election and I have no doubt you will continue to do so for the next term.

I present to this House a petition on behalf of the Certified General Accountants of Ontario, which seeks to provide access to public accounting licences for CGAs with three years of public accounting experience in Ontario. I'm delighted to affix my signature to the top of this petition and await, as do these individuals, a response to this matter.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I have a petition signed by several of my constituents in the Ottawa Valley which reads in part:

"Therefore, we, the undersigned residents of Ontario, do petition the government of Ontario to not only stop opposing religious education in our public schools but to give our public school boards the same freedom as enjoyed by separate school boards of education, since both boards are financed by Ontario tax dollars. That is, freedom to adopt a curriculum and sponsor activities that will provide religious studies of our chosen faith. That is, the Judaeo-Christian faith."

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): A similar petition, different wording, from again a number of

people in the Niagara Peninsula. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, demand that Karla Homolka's plea bargain be revoked by the Attorney General of Ontario, the Honourable Charles Harnick."

Again it's signed by a large number of people from the Niagara region.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SOLICITORS AMENDMENT ACT, 1995 LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PROCUREURS

Mr Chiarelli moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 3, An Act to amend the Solicitors Act / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les procureurs.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): Mr Speaker, I'll just read the explanatory note before the bill.

"The bill amends the Solicitors Act to allow solicitors to enter into contingency fee agreements with their clients in respect of an action or any proceeding in which the solicitor is to act on the client's behalf. Such an agreement must be in writing.

"The solicitor shall not enter into an agreement which would allow the solicitor to recover more than 20% of the award or of the value of the property recovered in the action or proceeding.

"A solicitor shall not enter into a contingency fee agreement if the action or proceeding for which the solicitor is retained is a criminal proceeding, a divorce proceeding or a proceeding involving support of a child or spouse or custody of a child."

LAW SOCIETY AMENDMENT ACT, 1995 LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE BARREAU

Mr Chiarelli moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 4, An Act to amend the Law Society Act / Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): This bill amends the Law Society Act to allow the law society's convocation to make rules respecting the election of benchers on a regional basis.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Recognizing the round of congratulations that have been marked in the House since our recommencement last week, I too want to take a few moments at the beginning of this speech to offer my congratulations to all those who have been elected and re-elected to this 36th Parliament of the Ontario Legislature.

I particularly want to welcome those who have been elected for the first time. I trust those new members will

find that their service here is fulfilling, that it's personally rewarding. I am sure they will find the experience to be as interesting and as challenging and periodically as frustrating as the experience that you had getting here.

Many of you may find or perhaps have already learned that the political process itself is not always the high road that we might like it to be. Regrettably, that reality can add to the public cynicism about politicians. I found it somewhat surprising to discover when I was first elected to public office some 25 years ago—hard as that may be to believe—that politics was seen as public service right up until the moment when you were elected, when many then were convinced that you were intent solely on enhancing your chances of re-election.

Well, 25 years and some rather interesting experiences later, I remain as convinced as ever that political office is public service. Our sense of commitment to our constituents and to the future of Ontario and its people is what surely motivates our seeking office and it is what should guide our every decision and our every action.

That is undeniably a rather high standard to adhere to, and veteran members will tell newly elected members that there are going to be times in this place when even the most careful observer will wonder whether the public interest is being served here. But it seems to me that if we ever lose the sense of why we are here, we undermine nothing less than our belief in democracy itself, because we are here as the people's representatives so that through us people may determine the nature of their government.

I'm not going to continue with that particular sermon; I don't happen to believe that this is a group of people that needs to be preached at. But every now and then in this business we're involved in I think it's important that we reaffirm our beliefs, and it seemed to me that there was no time better than at this beginning of a new session of a new Parliament, when those of us who have been here for a while meet for the first time with those who have just arrived. I can tell all new members that there will be few enough times in the future when we speak of common ground.

I believe we do share common ground, however, as we approach the critical decision that the people of Quebec will make on October 30.

Bien sûr, ici il y a un autre point sur lequel nous sommes tous d'accord. Nous espérons que la population du Québec choisira de demeurer au sein du Canada. Nous apprécions notre grand pays et nous apprécions le Québec en tant que partie intégrale et essentielle du Canada.

Mr Speaker, I can tell you that there will be few times again in this response to the speech from the throne when I am prepared to speak of common ground because, after all, we do serve as the official opposition. I am delighted that I have the support of a strong caucus in carrying forward the opposition role. For many obvious reasons, I wish that there were more of us, but the quality is there, without question. Both veterans and newly elected members bring to this House experience, knowledge and the perspective of varied backgrounds. We represent every region in this province and we will build on that as we do our job of hearing and raising people's concerns.

We accept both the decision of the electorate on June 8 and our responsibility to provide a voice for those who would have made a different choice. More than that, we accept the responsibility of examining the consequences of this new government's actions and its inactions. We will hold them accountable both for the promises that have been broken and for the impact of the promises they have kept.

This government was elected to implement an agenda which we opposed in many respects. After three months in office, they have now presented a throne speech which sets out, as everybody expected it to and as indeed it did, a program that was based on the Conservative campaign commitments, with some notable exceptions to which I will return.

1520

In the months ahead, we in the Liberal caucus will challenge ourselves to do more than just oppose the government's agenda, although we have already seen in the first three months that we're going to have ample opportunity and very valid reason to disagree with what's being done. There may in fact be times in the future when we will agree with the government's action, because there are points on which we've called for similar action in the past. We're not going to oppose actions that we believe are right just because it is Mr Harris's government that is acting. We will also, I serve notice, be ready to congratulate the Premier and his ministers if they move away from their more poorly considered positions, and there are a great many of those.

I suspect, I say to the people opposite, that many members of this government are already feeling caught in a rather awkward situation and feeling a little bit uncomfortable with it. After all, if the members of this government retreat from their campaign commitments, they're going to lose credibility in the public eye. If on the other hand they go ahead, the public will increasingly understand that the promises, those glorious promises that were made by the Conservatives throughout the election campaign, those promises that were set out in that revolutionary document, just don't lead to the ideal Ontario that seemed to be promised.

So the government, at the end of the day, is still going to lose credibility. It is just a question of when, because there is one very simple fact, and I am notoriously unable to see things as simple, but I know with certainty and I am ready to state absolutely unequivocally that the Conservatives cannot deliver all that they promised. It simply doesn't fit together and it doesn't fit with reality.

We will be concerned in this caucus with what has been left out of the Conservative agenda. Even more importantly, we are going to be concerned with who will be left out as this agenda is pursued.

There will be work to do for the official opposition, not to oppose just for the sake of being opposition, but because there are real and growing concerns among the population of this province, concerns that have to be raised. We will continue to put forward what we believe to be constructive and workable alternatives because the public deserves no less and because our own sense of integrity demands no less.

We acknowledge, at the beginning of our response to the speech from the throne, that this will not be an easy time to govern. Everyone appreciates that, and I say to the former Premier that he must appreciate that most particularly since he had the responsibility of governing in difficult times as well.

I've disagreed strongly with the former government. I should acknowledge that as well. I disagreed both with their ideological direction and in the management of most of the issues they addressed. But I have always respected the member for York South in his commitment to government and to this province. His continued belief that even in the most difficult times we must preserve the values of fairness and compassion is one which I, as a Liberal, applaud.

The challenge for us all in the months ahead will be to define and to reaffirm our values and to understand what they mean to government in the latter part of the 1990s. At some point, that debate within the Ontario Liberal Party will be carried forward by a new leader. But in the meantime I intend to lead the opposition in this Legislature and to bring to that leadership my own convictions and my own sense of the realities we face.

I can tell you that I am more concerned today than I have ever been about the Conservative agenda and what it will do to this province. The agenda, I recognize, has a lot of popular appeal. Clearly, there are many people who really want to believe that it's possible to have a \$4.7-billion cut in their income taxes, balance a budget that currently has an \$8.7-billion deficit and still protect the services that people need.

Everyone in my caucus and, I suspect, the members of the third party will remember all the promises that were made about the services that would be protected. You remember the list of promises: no cuts to health care, no cuts to classroom education, no cuts to policing, no cuts to agriculture, natural resources, tourism, and the list went on and on.

It seems almost magical to think that government could save millions on business subsidies and economic development programs and still ensure that 725,000 jobs would be created in this province, and I'm sure you all remember that promise too, that promise that there would be 725,000 new jobs created during this government's term in office.

Now, I recognize that that particular promise was conveniently left out of the throne speech that was presented, but although this is a response to the speech from the throne, I thought it was appropriate to at least note that that was part of an original commitment that somehow just didn't make it into the speech from the throne. The problem is, when you put a commitment in writing, we're likely to remember that it was made.

If all this seems rather magical, it is because it is indeed an illusion, an illusion that was skilfully created to respond to an anxious populace uncertain about what the future holds for this once unshakeable province. Part of the illusion, very carefully crafted, was to convey sort of a sense that we could return to those more secure and comfortable days simply by having a Conservative government again. But these are not the times of Bill

Davis, and the 70s' solutions are not adequate to deal with the realities of the 1990s. In any event, the current Conservative agenda bears no resemblance whatsoever to any agenda of any previous government of any party stripe. All that the government really wanted to do was to sort of evoke a memory of that more nostalgic era. I believe that Ontario, if their agenda is carried forward, will bear little resemblance to the Ontario that we have always known.

Let there be no question that we need change in the province of Ontario. The challenges are real. They are challenges that would have had to have been addressed no matter which party formed the government. Our economic unemployment, our financial problems, continue to be more profound than in any previous time in the history of this province. The reality of unemployment, the tenuousness of the jobs that are there, have made Ontarians very anxious about the future, and that is particularly true, as all of us know too well, for young people who are trying to start a career and can't find their first job, as it is for older laid-off workers who weren't ready to end their careers.

The hoped-for economic recovery has never really materialized. There are already forecasts of another economic downturn. Prolonged economic slowdown and higher unemployment make it more difficult for government to solve the deficit problems, and the services that people need more than ever in difficult economic times are threatened by government's fiscal straitjacket. We recognize all of that as reality.

We recognize then that the challenges are real and that people are more and more frustrated by government's inability to deal with them. People understandably don't like what's happened to this province, and they rightly demand change. In fact, I would suggest that after five years of government under the New Democrats, a large percentage of the people of this province wanted change that would take them as far as possible from what they saw as NDP mismanagement of the issues. So they elected a government that certainly promised that, a real reform group that promised radical change and revolution.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Capital R.

Mrs McLeod: A capital-R reform group promising revolutionary change.

I think the desire for change, which we all recognize is needed, was so great that not many people looked very closely at the price we would have to pay for that change, and the price has become higher and higher in just three short months.

Incidentally, people of this province did not elect a new government to create, to invent, new crises. The new Minister of Education seems to have missed that point along the way. People know that there are enough crises in this province. They really would like some of them resolved.

I happen to believe that people, in voting for change, which they clearly did, still want that change to be well managed. I don't believe many people really want the kind of change that revolutions bring, a chaos that will

certainly not lead us back to the security and the comfort of the 1970s and is highly unlikely to lead us forward to a more secure and stable future. And I don't believe, I truly do not believe, that a majority of people in this province want change that brings a benefit to themselves at the expense of others who are more vulnerable.

This government has tried consistently—it continued to try today in question period—to make scapegoats of those who are depicted as abusing the system. We all agree that abuse of the system, whether it be of our health care system or of our welfare system, has got to be addressed so that our very scarce dollars go to those people who really need them, go to provide services that are effective. I don't happen to think that our new snitch line is likely to solve the problems of abuse of the welfare system or deal with welfare fraud, but we do agree that those are real problems that have to be addressed.

But the agenda of this government is hurting real people with real problems, and there will be real needs that go unmet. I don't think many people voted consciously for that kind of change.

I should acknowledge, particularly perhaps to the members of my own caucus, that the kind of balanced and moderate and well-managed change I happen to believe in doesn't make for revolutionary campaign slogans. It doesn't allow the conjuring up, as we all saw during the election campaign, of a SkyDome full of welfare recipients whom somehow Mr Harris was going to magically make disappear. It obviously is not exciting, and as a leader of a party that put all its electoral fortunes on a program of balanced, moderate change, I clearly regret that, but I still happen to believe it is what works.

Revolution does not work, and it will not work in Ontario.

That is the essence of why I am concerned about this Conservative government's agenda. I realize that the new government is not going to worry too much about my concerns. They don't seem to be particularly interested in anybody's concerns, at least up to this point in time. They certainly don't want to listen to anyone who might challenge their agenda, although we see that the threat of legal action can get their attention on occasion. But even that doesn't always slow them down, and as proof of that, you just need to talk to some of the people who are involved in non-profit housing bringing suit against the government for breach of contract today.

This government doesn't seem to have any concern at all for the consequences of the decisions that it's making or the actions that it's taking. Collectively as a government, individually as ministers, as Premier, the members of this government are refusing, absolutely refusing, to consider the impact of their actions. They have shown themselves more than ready to lay the blame for the problems that exist on anybody they can find to lay the blame on.

They're even more ready to pass the responsibility for solving the problems on to someone else, although I must admit I am surprised that consistently in our first two question periods the Premier has turned to us to ask for

advice on how to solve the problems. I really did think they presented to people a plan they intended to implement, and I wonder where the plan has gone, if they are now turning for advice.

But we see a government that is just marching ahead. I can only describe them as reminding me of a blind-folded executioner ready to just wield the axe, wash their hands, move on. It's as if they feel that their mandate somehow gives them absolution for any of the consequences.

I realize that no one who is sitting on the benches opposite, no one who is a member of this new government, can let themselves be swayed by seeing what's happening to people and to services and to communities across this province. Clearly, it has been established as a basic ground rule for this government that you've got to be a true believer in the revolutionary doctrine. If you want to be accepted, you've got to be a true believer. We've seen what's happened to anyone who might have disagreed with this government's agenda even at some point in the distant past. You have to stay a true believer if you want to get ahead in this government.

I say to the Minister of Community and Social Services, it's quite clear that you can't afford the near-conversion you seemed to be experiencing a little bit earlier. He had to be put back on the straight track of the doctrine.

That's the context. That's the context in which the government presented its first speech from the throne last week. They said at the beginning that it was going to be a short speech. They said it could have been even shorter, and in fact it could have for all it told us that was new or different. It was clearly what we expected it to be, again with some particular exceptions.

It set out a direction, but we've seen the direction already. We've had three months of government by decree. We've seen the singleminded pursuit of an agenda that is determined to cut things and to stop things and to dismantle things but puts absolutely nothing constructive in place—nothing constructive on waste management, nothing constructive on long-term care or advocacy or legal aid or welfare reform.

We've seen a government that is determined to demonstrate how tough it is and is prepared to choose confrontation, consistently, over consultation.

We've seen no willingness to sit down and actually work with people to find solutions, unless we make an exception of the Attorney General when he found himself face to face with a subpoena and decided there was a better way of dealing with the issue than that.

We have an Education minister who cancels public hearings because anybody who might actually care enough to make a presentation would have to be dismissed as just having a vested interest.

We have a Premier who appeared reluctant even to meet with native leaders, at least publicly.

So I have to ask, where does it go from here, from that direction that was set out in the speech from the throne? Where does this revolution lead us if it's not checked by some real common sense?

Let's look at the promises and the actions of this government to date to try to get a sense of what is ahead, what lies behind the words and the rosy-sounding intent, at least, of last week's throne speech.

I think we have to begin with what is clearly the government's number one priority—at least, certainly, it has been the focus of all its actions to date—and that is to get the deficit under control.

We do agree, I say to the Premier, that the government's goal must be to get the deficit to zero so that our debt and the interest on that debt does not continue to grow. This is not, in my view, a matter for some kind of abstract debate by economic theorists. It is a very real problem, a problem of a billion dollars more every year going to pay interest on the debt, as the throne speech noted and as many of us have noted over and over again. It's a problem of a debt that has more than doubled in the last five years. Without question, we need to reduce our costs so that we don't keep adding to a debt that mortgages our children's future. On that we have no disagreement.

But without question, this government, a government that claims deficit reduction as a priority, is going to make our debt situation even worse if it goes ahead with a 30% cut in income tax. That is the great irony, that they are committed to taking action on the one hand which works against their clear priority on the other. That 30% cut in income tax will cost at least \$5 billion, probably closer to \$6 billion, and it is the commitment to that cut that is driving the kinds of cuts we have been seeing in the first three months of this government's mandate, the kinds of cuts that we are just beginning to see.

The Conservative agenda might have looked good as people looked at each one of the parts. Again, how would you not like to have that income tax cut and balance the budget and protect the services? The problem was, the parts never added up to be a whole, and it starts to collapse around the commitment to that income tax cut.

But the other thing that I truly believe is driving this government's agenda is the need to look tough, because that's what political popularity demands. Okay, Mr Premier, I'm prepared after three months to give you toughness. You've demonstrated you're prepared to be tough: You've shown you're prepared to be tough with the cuts. We'll give you that now. But I think it is also important that you show you're ready to be responsible.

The first step in responsibility in dealing with what you recognize as your number one priority, which is financial responsibility, is to bring in a budget. It is absolutely unbelievable, unbelievable, that a Premier who keeps telling us and the world, including the investment community, that a financial crisis is ahead of us is not prepared to then bring in a budget that will set out his plan to deal with the crisis. I don't know how it reassures financial markets to tell them that the financial world in Ontario is facing a critical situation when the government doesn't tell them what it's going to do to respond to that. 1540

Surely a budget would help. Surely that's not a reason for not bringing in a budget at this point in time. Surely responsible action on this great concern of fiscal responsibility means bringing in a budget that will let us see the long-term financial plans of this government, the details of the spending cuts, the way in which they are going to accommodate that income tax cut and still reach a goal of balancing a budget and what that is going to mean. Surely this government is responsible for bringing in a budget to show not only us but the people of this province how it is going to manage that financial agenda and not just continue to show us day by day and week by week the tough-guy cuts, because that's simply not enough.

Today in the House, in response to our call yet again for this government to bring in a budget, the Premier referred the issue to his Finance minister, who told us that he has to now wait for, I think it was-I ask our Finance critic—the recommendations of an independent financial committee that would then recommend how the government should show its finances. I find that not only an unusual reason for delaying bringing in a financial statement and refusing, for the first time ever in Ontario's history, to bring in a budget—I find that an unusual excuse to give—but I also find it absolutely incomprehensible, because I think back to when the government presented its plans last May, the plans they campaigned on, and it seemed to me they were telling the Ontario public that they had a financial plan. They were trying to tell people that they had a basis of a budget not only for year 1, but years 2, 3, 4 and, if I'm not failing in my memory, it was even for year 5 of a potential Mike Harris government.

If they had a financial plan, if they believed then that the financial plan made sense, and if they think now that it still makes sense even though they actually have the responsibility of implementing it, then I say to the Premier and his Finance minister that they should have had a basis to bring in a budget as soon as they were elected. There is no reason for delay, no excuse that holds any water at all.

I was never convinced, of course, that the current government did have a financial plan that made sense. I was never convinced that the numbers in the plan added up, and I suspect that the reason we do not have a budget is because the government is desperately trying to put together some numbers that do add up, and when those numbers are put forward we may not see the tax cut that the Premier has promised.

The Premier may feel that he has at least a couple of excuses that he could fall back on, and I ask the members of the House to think about whether or not those excuses are going to work.

The first excuse we are likely to hear if the Premier backs away from that commitment he made to people that he was going to reduce their income taxes by 30%, the first excuse he may give, is the old standby, "Well, you know, once we got into government and opened the books, we found out that the situation was a lot worse than we thought it would be."

Mr Bradley: Now, there's a new line.

Mrs McLeod: That's a new line indeed. So as we hear that line and as we hear that line used as an excuse

for deeper cuts than the government ever talked about, or perhaps as an excuse for not doing the tax cut that will drive even deeper cuts, I will keep reminding the Premier and his Finance minister that all of us knew last spring how bad the situation was. We all knew about the auditor's projection of the real deficit. I'm not sure why the Finance minister now has to await the recommendations of an independent commission when the auditor has clearly told us how we should present the government's finances. We knew what the real situation was based on the auditor's report. We all knew and you will remember that the previous government spent at least \$1.2 billion between Christmas and Easter of last year. We all knew that \$2 billion in federal transfer payment reductions had not been accounted for. We all knew all of that. I suggest to the Premier that he knew it when he committed himself and now his government to a 30% cut in income tax. So that excuse simply won't wash.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Do you want us to cut the taxes or don't you?

Mrs McLeod: Premier, I say to you it's your commitment. It's your commitment that we're going to hold you accountable for, both for whether or not you keep the commitments and for the impact of those commitments if you act on them.

Hon Mr Harris: What do you want?

Mrs McLeod: I suggest to the Premier, as he asks me what I would like, that he does have the responsibility of governing and he did make commitments to the people of this province, commitments which he insisted would be implemented if he had an opportunity to form a government.

Premier, you now have the opportunity you sought, the opportunity to form a government, and you have the responsibility for either fulfilling your commitments and dealing with the impact of those commitments which you made and which you had not thought out thoroughly, or you have the responsibility of talking to the people of this province about why you retract those commitments and what the impact is.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, the Premier's interjections are entirely consistent with the kind of direction we've also seen from this government. That's the direction that they are going to try and blame someone else for the problems but at the same time make somebody else responsible for the solutions. I suggest to the Premier that since he does now have the responsibility of forming a government, he is also responsible for finding the solutions. He can't simply turn to someone else continuously, nor can he blame someone else for forcing him to break his promise.

That's why the second excuse that he may bring out if he backs away from the income tax cut commitment will simply not work. I think he may try and claim that in this time when we are all concerned about economic growth and the investment that's needed for economic growth and job creation, at a time when we all share that concern, he is being advised by Bay Street and the invest-

ment community that he shouldn't make his tax cut because it will drive the deficit up and that will be bad for business.

They are saying that, and they're right. Not only that, but they were saying exactly the same thing when the so-called Common Sense Revolution came out, and they were also right then. Where is the common sense in making a huge tax cut when the highest priority is deficit reduction? But it made election campaign sense, and so the promise was made.

I did talk about tax cuts in the election campaign too. I'm surprised the Premier hasn't reminded me of that in his interjections. But I believed in a moderate, targeted tax cut that would help to stimulate economic growth and in turn create jobs. I say to the Premier and to the minister responsible for economic development, who responded to a question in the House today, that there is no evidence at all, none at all, that a cut in income tax will kickstart investment in this province, no evidence that it will restore consumer confidence or that it will do anything else that either helps the economy or helps the people who need help most. It will simply put more money into the pockets of the most wealthy of our citizens. The wealthier you are, the more you will benefit.

This is certainly not an agenda for economic growth and job creation that the Conservative government is offering, and all the words about jobs and the importance of jobs that were in the beginning of the throne speech will not get one single person working. There is no plan in the throne speech for economic growth. The Conservatives are offering only wishful and obviously overly optimistic thinking. There is no plan in the throne speech to get people back to work. In fact, the Conservative agenda offers nothing but more and more cut-induced layoffs, and some 70,000 jobs in this province have already been jeopardized by the actions of this government in its first three months.

Without economic growth, without job creation, without getting people back to work again, there will be no real and lasting deficit management, there will just be deeper and deeper cuts, and that too is not a matter for abstract economic debate.

Let me acknowledge that cost reduction is absolutely essential; let me acknowledge that again. But it will be tough enough to manage the cuts that are necessitated by the existing deficit without having to find \$5 billion or \$6 billion more to pay for the cut in income tax. If the government does go ahead with this promise, which was, after all, the centrepiece of its campaign commitments, what happens, I ask, to all the other commitments that were made, particularly the promises that the services people need and value won't be lost?

We have already seen, just three months into this government's mandate, that the promise not to cut health care has been broken, broken with more than \$130 million in cuts in the government's first financial statement. The Minister of Finance, when he presented that statement, tried to camouflage the cut by saying that the dollars would be reallocated, but in fact they were part of the reductions that he needed to get to the deficit figure he presented to the Ontario public that day. The minister

cannot have it both ways and the government cannot have it both ways. You cannot cut the health care budget and use that for deficit reduction and still allocate those same dollars to services.

1550

There is no question that a cut of 10% or 20% to hospitals would also be a cut to health care, yet the Premier was not prepared to commit to maintaining current levels of funding for hospitals today. The government will soon learn that you can't find 10% to 20% cuts in funding in savings to administration, even with the restructuring that we all know has to take place.

The answer of this government to our questions about what happened to the promise not to cut health care is that by, I think it was 1999 that the Health Minister said today, certainly in time for the next election, and I suspect just in time for the next election, the health care budget will be back to its current levels. But the cuts to health care will take place now, and in fact those cuts to health care are happening now, and there is no disputing that.

Now we have the Premier back saying that he does not rule out user fees for health care, a retreat to a position that we know he has always advocated, and so it was with some surprise that we heard his commitment and saw the written commitment in that revolutionary doctrine, that there would be no user fees in health care, no new user fees.

Mr Bradley: Seems like a program to me.

Mrs McLeod: Well, the Premier was certainly prepared to be categorical when he spoke to the Ontario electorate, not only when they brought out the revolutionary document but during the election campaign, that he would not be introducing user fees, new user fees, in health care, and any introduction of new user fees now would clearly be a violation of a promise that the people of this province I believe continue to hold dear.

The throne speech doesn't say that seniors will face a user fee for drugs in the future. It left out the commitment that there would be no new user fees, a notable exclusion from the revolution document, but it doesn't actually say that seniors will face a user fee for their drugs in the future. But the Premier, interestingly enough, has refused to say that they won't.

Now, making seniors pay for their drugs, whether the government calls it a copayment or anything else, is a new user fee. It is a user fee to be paid by those who are on fixed incomes and who are facing increasing health problems.

Surely in the province of Ontario we are not at the point where we are going to move towards an Americanstyle system of health care, where it is a fact that people over the age of 65, those same people who are faced with the possibility of having to pay a new user fee for their drugs—in the United States that population of people over 65 spent 21% of their income on health care, and Republican proposals in the United States would add another 20% to 25% more in what they euphemistically term "new deductibles," or copayments.

So perhaps it should not have been surprising to us

that there was no mention of the commitment that there would be no cuts in health care in the throne speech, that there was no repeating of the commitment that there would be no new user fees. Perhaps that should not have been surprising, because we did hear the Premier say, in his pre-session availability, that for him there were no sacred cows in his war on the deficit. It seems that he meant that not even health care was sacred. That certainly was not the message in the revolution manifesto.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): Or the election.

Mrs McLeod: It was not the Premier's message during the election campaign. His message then was no cuts to health care, no user fees, no new taxes.

So I ask the Premier, is a user fee for health care a new tax? Will the Premier have his promised referendum on any new tax before he goes ahead with it, or does he feel quite free to take back that income tax cut that he's offering up with a new health care tax on people? Or, I ask the members of my own caucus, should we at this point simply give up trying to find any integrity in the Conservative campaign commitments? Clearly, there is one thing that is not sacred, and that is the Premier's promise to the people of this province, because even the promise to resign if you break your promise is already just one more broken promise.

Mr Speaker, I can tell you that Liberals remain committed to our health care system. We believe that we can find ways to manage costs and ensure that we still have high-quality, universal health care. That could only be achieved through long-term planning and real partnerships, and so far this government has done nothing but cut both the health care budgets and its health care commitments.

This government also made a promise in another area, a promise we will all remember, a promise not to cut police services, yet now they're poised for up to a 20% cut in municipal funding. I have to ask, what effect does this government suppose that this kind of cut to municipal funding is going to have on municipal police services?

Once again the Premier and his colleagues will say they are not responsible. The municipalities will be faced with making a totally arbitrary cut, with managing it. They will be ones held accountable if the cut leads to an increase in property taxes or to a reduction in police services, just as the TTC today was held accountable for the cut to Wheel-Trans. Somebody else will be responsible for making the really tough decisions.

The government will make the promise; the municipalities will somehow have to make good on it. That is downloading, pure and simple.

Then we come to the promise that there will be no cuts to classroom education. Who has to deliver on that one? Clearly, not the Mike Harris government, because their job is to make the budget cuts. The school boards will figure out how to deal with social contract obligations, classroom sizes, whether they can still offer special education or junior kindergarten. The government can still claim that it didn't cut classroom funding; it was the school boards that did it. All the government did was cut

the funding for classroom education.

I know that there are a great many people who would argue that we spend too much money on education, and I've heard many of the arguments that are made and will be made in the future to justify cutbacks. After all, aren't there a lot of frills that can be cut? Can't we just go back to the days when the teacher taught and if the student didn't keep up, well, after all, that's the student's problem?

Why do we need special programs to help ensure that every student actually does have a chance to develop his or her potential? Education, after all, used to be a lot simpler and a whole lot less expensive. Anyway, why do we need junior kindergarten, because schools aren't there to babysit. If you listen to those kinds of arguments, as this government obviously does, you can cut away with absolutely no concern at all.

There are places where efficiencies can be found in education, and they are going to have to be, but we are in danger of losing much that we have gained in public education—in large part, I say to the Premier, under previous Conservative governments—if there is no willingness on the part of this government to understand what is valuable and must be preserved and what must be changed.

I can tell you that I was dismayed that the only reference to education in the speech from the throne was a critical one. There was no recognition at all of the strengths of the education system in this province, and I suggest that is a very poor basis on which to begin to address the issue of educational reform.

We all agree again that some changes are needed in the system. In fact, the government should have had a head start on this one. The royal commission on education, I recognize, was set in place by the previous government, but it set out a direction for change that actually won broad support. It even had the general support at least of all three political parties, and that's a rather rare situation, members will find, in this House. But that was a gift that the minister of education apparently either couldn't understand or wasn't prepared to accept.

Mr Bradley: He was busy creating a crisis.

Mrs McLeod: I think he was busy creating a crisis, I say to my House leader, but I think perhaps also it seemed just a little bit too easy when the way you make your mark in this particular government is to take tough stands. So the minister did set out to create a crisis, to make things appear worse than even he believed they were. So the minister himself, I suggest, is now a crisis, and he is a crisis that education in this province cannot afford. There is too much real and very serious work that has to be done.

The minister seems to have no understanding of how you successfully implement change. It does take some degree of partnership and consultation, even if you think that's a nuisance, which the minister obviously does. Whatever your views on the direction of the interim report on school board amalgamation that Mr Sweeney presented, you would have to agree, and Mr Sweeney I'm sure would agree, that it is incomplete. There are no

estimates of cost savings; there are a number of rather significant problems that have to be addressed.

All of this presumably was to be dealt with after a period of consultation, except that now there will be no meaningful consultation. The minister, it seems, was afraid that he might hear from those people with vested interests. I wonder who they are. People who have children in the school system perhaps, or maybe people who work within the school system and have devoted their careers to it, or maybe it would just be people who actually care about the future of education in this province.

You wouldn't want to risk hearing from those kinds of vested interests. You wouldn't want to waste a lot of time hearing from people who will be affected by any decision that this government might make, particularly since the minister might actually hear from some who don't agree with what he wants to do.

1600

But if you still believe that it is worth trying to tell this particular Minister of Education and Training what you think, I want the public to know that they can call. You won't get to talk to anyone, you won't have the benefit of asking questions or hearing other views, but you can at least make your voice heard, provided you restrict your comments to three minutes.

This minister has turned the important issue of educational reform into a farce. He cannot be effective in bringing about change even though he was practically handed a blueprint for it. He had to earn credibility in his new role, and he has lost any chance of that.

I confess, and I am ready to confess it, that I am actually one of those who has a vested interest. I've been involved in education for a good part of my life. I happen to believe that it's important to the future of our communities and to the future of individuals, and I just don't want to see educational opportunity destroyed by a government with a short-term political agenda and no long-term plans at all.

The throne speech touches on the need to restructure and to streamline and to work cooperatively to find efficiencies in the education system. But what isn't mentioned in the throne speech is that any dollars saved will be part of the government's deficit-reduction plan. None of those dollars will go to classroom education, and of course, as with health care, the cuts are going to come first, before any savings are found. If the administrative efficiencies don't equal the cuts, classroom education will be affected. But I suggest with great concern that long before the cuts actually hit the classroom directly the support that's provided to students and teachers will be reduced or eliminated and we will indeed be forced back to the days where the student either kept up or dropped out. The price that our society will pay for that is immeasurable.

But at least elementary and secondary education was referred to in the throne speech, and I want to acknowledge that, because post-secondary education and training, which are so critical both to individual success and to our economic future, weren't even mentioned. We know what lies ahead, though, and maybe that's why it wasn't set

out again in the throne speech, because if the promises are kept, there will be at least a \$400-million cut—I think I've got that figure right, from the revolutionary document—to colleges and universities and a deregulation or partial deregulation, whatever that means, of our tuition fees.

The Harris government will probably claim it is not cutting post-secondary education; it's not responsible for any direct cuts to education. If the colleges and the universities can't find the \$400 million by looking at those always-appealing administrative savings, then they can raise tuition to make up the difference.

Well, I've been told by one university official that if his university were to make up its share of that \$400-million cut with a tuition increase, the tuition for students in that university would go up by 65%. We know that tuition this year is up by 10% and that there has been a marked decline in applications for colleges and universities. I wonder what a 65% increase in tuition would do to discourage access for those who are not well off.

I think if the Harts, who were mentioned in the throne speech as planning to spend those income-tax-cut dollars on new clothes for their children, have any hopes that they may want to send their children to college or university, they might just want to save the dollars for the increased tuition they're going to have to pay.

I'm deeply concerned that children themselves have no place at all on the agenda of this government. I think we should look beyond education, which I've addressed at some length because I have a vested interest, to the cutbacks for the children's aid societies, children's aid societies which even now can barely meet their legal mandate for child protection. Now the children's aid society in Metro Toronto says that it won't be able to probe child abuse allegations as quickly as is even required by law.

Have we truly reached the point, after finally beginning to understand the sheer horrors of child abuse, that we cannot act quickly to stop it and prevent it from happening again? What kind of society can be ready to pocket a few more tax dollars knowing that children are being abused? I don't believe that people in Ontario will tolerate this retreat from a commitment to end child abuse.

The Minister of Community and Social Services of course has indicated that he would have the children's aid society actually expand its mandate, seemingly unaware that if you can't act quickly to protect children from abuse, you certainly can't protect them for hunger either.

Now, the minister, I acknowledge, claimed that he was taken out of context in saying that if parents don't feed their children and children are hungry, the children's aid society would step in. But it seems to me that he was saying exactly what I heard Mr Harris, his Premier, say at an earlier period of time: that if parents are irresponsible and they can't care for their children, the children's aid society should take them into foster care, find a foster parent for them.

If families haven't the money to provide adequate food and clothing and shelter, I wonder if indeed they are irresponsible parents. I wonder where the responsibility for solving this problem lies. Surely the state has some role here, and surely it is not to find foster parents for more and more children at great cost, both financial and human, both now and in the future.

If we're concerned about the health and wellbeing of our children, we should also be concerned about cutbacks to agencies which provide mental health services to children. We should remember, because the Minister of Community and Social Services keeps wanting to remind us of things, that only 50% of the mental health needs of children are now being met.

I know that these cuts may help the government with its deficit, but I think it's a fair question to ask what they will mean to the future of this province. The debt is indeed—I acknowledge it—a mortgage on our children's future which must be dealt with. It is a debt created by our generation, but we cannot and we must not pay it off at the expense of our children themselves.

Hon Mr Harris: Against every cut we've made—**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Mrs McLeod: Now, if the Premier wonders about commitments, I say to the Premier, who interjects at this point, who seems somewhat concerned about my concern for children and where they fit on his agenda, I remind the Premier that the only commitment that he's actually made to children's services is a promise of a breakfast program.

I remember that commitment well because it's the one social policy that I remember this Premier championing. In fact, he has championed it for the last two years. It even sort of got into the throne speech, although almost incidentally—it became "such as nutritional programs for children." This was the breakfast program that was to be put in place immediately, but when our critic responsible for children's services asked the Premier when his breakfast program would be put in place, he said, "If the Liberal critic wants a breakfast program, let her start one." So much for this Premier as a champion of social concern.

The children of parents on welfare are even less likely now to have a nutritional breakfast at home. I wonder if this government remembered, if the minister responsible for Community and Social Services remembered, as he reminds us of other facts, as they cut welfare and family benefit payments by 22%, that 38% of those on welfare are children. That's some 500,000 children who have just been affected by that 22% cut in welfare.

I wonder whether this government cares what the longer-term effect of those cuts will be. Have they given any thought at all to the family stresses that will build, the ways in which the healthy development of children will be affected or the cost to this society in the future? This truly is the politics of punishment, but the ones being punished are not Mr Harris's stereotypical welfare bums; the ones being punished most are the children. Suggesting that buying cheap tuna or dented tins of spaghetti is an answer is either the most appallingly cynical or the most appallingly aware response that I have heard a minister make. I don't believe that inexperi-

ence is any excuse for that kind of trivializing of something that causes real anguish for families.

1610

Now, I do share a belief that the goal of real welfare reform is to help people get off welfare and back to work. But a parent, on welfare or otherwise, cannot go to work unless there is access to child care, and child care is clearly off this government's agenda. Here again we have both a minister and a Premier showing how totally unaware they are of today's realities, suggesting that neighbours or other family members can look after the children—unless this government, this Premier, deliberately want to force us back to those nostalgic earlier times when we women were back in the home and where grandma was there to make the cookies and look after the kids. Well, it may be nostalgia, but that's not the way of the world in 1995, and Mike Harris, Premier of Ontario, cannot try to push us back that way, not if he wants those single parents back at work.

Last May, Mr Harris seemed to recognize that child care was essential to welfare reform. He even said so in writing. But that was then. Now he has a mandate to do what it seems he really wants to do. I think it's important to recognize that those cuts to child care will hurt more than welfare recipients. I don't know whether or not Lindsay Mason, who's going to use her income tax cut dollars for home improvements, has young children, but if so, I suggest that she's going to need those tax dollars to pay her increased costs of child care.

Getting people back to work, not just people on welfare but unemployed people across this province, was the single promise that meant the most to the people of Ontario. Failure to deliver on this promise will be the greatest breach of trust of all. This government said that government doesn't create jobs. We agree. But it nevertheless claimed that its economic plan would lead to the creation of 725,000 new jobs. They've dropped it now, but it was a promise made when the revolution was presented so proudly last spring.

Again, there is no more evidence today than there was then that an income tax cut will trickle through to the creation of new jobs. There is lots of evidence of more people losing their jobs immediately as a direct result of this government's actions. The only guarantee in the future that this government offers on that central promise of jobs is that there will be more and more layoffs. I wonder if that's what people expected when they gave this government a mandate.

Mandatory workfare was one of the issues that the Conservatives made a major campaign plank. Now, no one knew what that meant, including the Premier. Some of us didn't like what it seemed to mean, but at least it seemed to suggest to a great many people in this province that it meant that people would be working, yet there's still no plan to get people back to work.

The government gets totally confused when they try to tell us what they mean by workfare, so no wonder they can't tell us how it will work. But there is one bottom line: There are no jobs for people to go to. The jobs aren't there. There were 4,000 fewer people working in Ontario in August than there were in July. Yet the

minister said that people on welfare had time to get their affairs in order, time to go out and get a job by this weekend. I don't think that we'll find there was any sudden drop in unemployment this weekend, and it isn't because people were too lazy to try and get out and get a job by Sunday. It is because the jobs aren't there.

If the jobs aren't there and people aren't working and benefits have been cut, we are going to see more food bank use. The government has washed its hands of any responsibility for affordable housing, so there will be more homelessness. Even the funding for emergency shelters may be cut, and I wonder where this government thinks people will go. All the doors are being closed at once and not a single new door is being opened.

Who else will be left out as this government marches ahead with its scorched earth, nothing is sacred, we have to make the cuts no matter who or what is hurt policy? The commitment to protect seniors and the disabled has been totally ignored. Cuts to Wheel-Trans, to the benefits of seniors and disabled on general welfare assistance made short work of that particular promise.

What will happen to a commitment that this province has always made for greater equity for all of its citizens? The only promise the government has made here is to scrap the employment equity legislation, and that is a promise they undoubtedly will keep. There are in fact some nice words in the throne speech about, and I quote, "a non-legislative equal opportunity plan," but the question is whether or not the government will do anything at all to address the real barriers that exist to ensuring equal opportunity, because maintaining, and again I quote from the throne speech, "a discrimination-free workplace," as important as that is, is simply not enough.

I have never supported an approach to equity that was a guarantee of access, an approach that opens doors to some and selectively shuts others out. But I believe that we must have a clear commitment and a sustained effort to break down the barriers that do exist if indeed every individual is to have a chance to participate in a society which is fair and open and holds an opportunity for success.

It's not directly relevant to my response to the speech from the throne, but I do want to stop for a moment to express my regret, in a non-partisan way, if I may, that there are fewer women in this Legislature today than there were in our last Parliament. In fact, there were never a lot of us. There were 26 in the last Parliament—we were 20% of the total Legislature—but we are now only 19, 15% of the total.

Any attempt to explain that will be a subject for further reflections on another day and in another forum, I'm sure, but it is a reality that I felt should be noted, and it reinforces my concern about whether real equality of opportunity to participate exists.

Let me return now to the world of revolution and radical change the Conservatives promised and the throne speech sets out. Where does the revolution lead this province? Not exactly to the more ideal Ontario the Conservatives promised, not to a province where people are working and heath care, education and police services are protected, certainly not to a province where the needs

of children and seniors and the disabled and the homeless are met, and not to an Ontario which ensures fairness and equity and tolerance.

Mr Bradley: I bet they won't move to Mississippi either.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Bradley: Alabama, Louisiana.

The Speaker: The member for St Catharines is out of order.

Mrs McLeod: This revolution will lead, without question, to labour unrest, and without labour stability there will be no new investment in Ontario and there will be even higher unemployment. This government talks about harmonious relationships between business and labour, but it is clearly ready to declare war on labour, because that, after all, is what they said they would do.

There will be increasing tension with the native people of this province, unless the government gives a clear message that it is ready to negotiate with native leaders to resolve legitimate concerns. Simply being tough will not ease the tension and the distrust that is developing.

So we face a future that offers a guarantee of higher unemployment because of layoffs, less health care and education, more homelessness and even hunger, more tension, and then the prospect of more violence. We are unlikely to see more investment because of the sense of insecurity that will be created, and we are, ironically, at the end of the day, unlikely to see a balanced budget. We note that the commitment to bring in balanced budget legislation was one of the other things which just didn't make it into the throne speech as a priority.

What will we have gained at the end of a first term of this government? Perhaps—perhaps—a few more dollars in the hands of the most well-off. And how much will we have lost? Who is likely to benefit from this government's agenda? The biggest businesses perhaps? Not if your business happens to be forestry, in my part of the province, or agriculture, in the House leader's part of the province, or film development. All of those have already faced cuts in the programs that support their industries.

Middle-income working people, supposedly the beneficiaries of this government's agenda, are unlikely to be beneficiaries at the end of the day, not when their \$70-amonth income tax cut is taken back with a health levy, higher tuition for college and university student children, expensive child care, a host of new user fees and perhaps higher property taxes to pay for police and education.

1620

Communities across this province will certainly not be the beneficiaries of the Conservative agenda: not Metropolitan Toronto with its subway construction already stopped; or Hamilton, where promises of funding the Red Hill Creek Expressway are still unmet; or Windsor, where I guess maybe they're going to have some kind of a paved parking lot where the courthouse foundations have already been laid—no one knows what will happen to the casino—and not Niagara Falls, which just lost not only promised jobs but support for its focus on tourism as a route to economic renewal; and the list of affected communities will go on.

Revolutions are for the strong, there's no doubt about that. In a world where the name of the game is toughness, the first to be hurt will be the most vulnerable: the poor, children, seniors, the disabled. But the agenda that the Conservatives have presented does not stop there. They have come to government having built on people's fears and anxieties. They have created a climate where the fittest will survive at the expense of the less strong, but it is an "us and them" approach to the world. It is divisive and it is certainly not what Ontario has always been about.

I believe that as the Conservative government cuts deeper and broader, more and more people in this province will come to realize that they indeed are "them" and not "us." They will understand that the illusion that this government created to assure people that we could keep all the services we wanted and have jobs and extra money in our pockets was an illusion. I don't believe this province can afford to pay the price of trying to make it real.

I do believe the role of government must change. It has become too costly and too interventionist; no question about that, no argument there. But I do not believe we can just dismantle government and let the market reign free. Government surely has a role in supporting and enabling its citizens to live and grow and work together and indeed a responsibility to ensure that every citizen has an opportunity to participate and to contribute. Furthermore, I happen to believe that we cannot respond to today's challenges unless we actually involve people in finding solutions and have some faith in what they can achieve.

The best politician, they say, is an idealist without illusions. I have no illusions that my vision of Ontario is easy to achieve. I know that making partnerships actually work is truly tough stuff, although it is never seen that way, but I am convinced that it is the only route to a more secure and a prosperous Ontario.

I am unapologetically an idealist. I happen to believe in Ontario and in its people, all of them. I believe that we can build on our great strengths, that we do not need the politics of division. We must not sacrifice some to the benefit of others. That direction is not only wrong, it is shortsighted and it will not work.

In the name of compassion and fairness and in the name of just plain common sense, if we can still use those terms in Ontario today, I believe we must stop the worst of the revolution before we in this province are changed utterly. William Butler Yeats, in a poem that rather ironically suggested "the centre cannot hold," wrote that:

The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity.

Now, that's not a quote that I'm particularly comfortable with because I have never been given to somewhat moralistic judgements about the best and the worst. But I do believe that those of us who care, and who care deeply about this province and its people and our future, must make our voices heard with as much passionate intensity as we can summon.

My commitment and the commitment of my caucus is to care deeply and to make our voices heard. As a beginning, I then propose the following motion as an amendment to the government motion on the throne speech.

It is moved by Mrs McLeod and seconded by Mr Bradley that:

This House profoundly regrets that the new government has put forward an agenda that is a breach of trust for Ontarians who were promised jobs and a brighter future and that therefore this House condemns the government:

- 1. For its litany of broken campaign promises.
- 2. For its failure to reaffirm its plan to see the creation of 725,000 jobs.
- 3. For its failure to reaffirm its commitment not to cut health care funding.
- 4. For proceeding hastily to cut welfare benefits while the promise to help people get off welfare and into the workforce goes unfulfilled.
- 5. For its failure to put forward a constructive agenda, and for instead practising the politics of punishment and intolerance.

6. For its overwhelming and clear commitment to put Ontario on a path toward higher unemployment, a widening gap between the rich and poor, a health care system faced with cutbacks and threatened with user fees, reduced access to education and policies that benefit the wealthy most at the expense of the most vulnerable in society.

I present this amendment to the resolution on the throne speech and assure this House that it is an agenda we will oppose.

The Speaker: I have a motion that's moved by Mrs McLeod, and it's seconded. Is there further debate?

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker: Carried? Carried.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, with responsibility for Women's Issues): I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1628.

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Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	ND	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible fo women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda	Guelph	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance, government House leader / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Fisher, Barb	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward- Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	L	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio, Workers' Compensation Board / ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de la Commission des accidents du travail
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités		
Johnson, Hon / L'hon Dave	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion		
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC			
Jordan, Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement		
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC			
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles		
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND			
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L			
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L			
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	New Democratic Party whip / whip du Nouveau Parti démocratique		
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND			
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC			
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND			
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC			
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND			
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND			
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC			
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC			
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L			
McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	Speaker / Président		
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition		
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition		
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L			
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre		
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines		
Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs		
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to minister responsible for native affairs adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones		
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind			
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC			
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports		
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports		
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC			
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L			
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC			
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L			
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND			
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC			
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L			
Rae, Bob	York South / -Sud	ND			
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L			

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
Sampson, Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.	Carleton	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	
Stockwell, Chris	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.	Markham	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G & Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales ; ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	Α
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation







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First Session, 36th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 3 October 1995

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 3 octobre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 octobre 1995

The House met at 1330. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS
TRADUCTEURS ET INTERPRÈTES

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): I am pleased today to recognize St Jerome's Day. Named after the Christian saint of translators, September 30 has been declared National and International Translation Day by the Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council and the International Federation of Translators, a worldwide organization having consultative status with UNESCO.

Here in our province, members of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario, or ATIO, have been undertaking the valuable work of translating and interpreting since 1921. ATIO, which presently has about 1,000 members, is the oldest translators' association in Canada and the first in the world to obtain legal status for its members in 1989.

La capacité de communiquer en nombreuses langues, compte tenu des particularités culturelles de chacun, est un facteur de toute première importance pour l'harmonie sociale et pour le développement dans notre province.

Je profite de cette occasion pour rendre hommage aux membres de l'ATIO qui, de par leur travail dans les secteurs public et privé, contribuent si précieusement à l'atteinte de ces objectifs.

RAY NAPPER

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): It's with great sadness, yet at the same time great pride that I want to speak to this assembly today about Ray Napper from Welland who was laid to rest in Welland this morning after being taken from his family, his friends and his community at the very early age of 63.

For 18 years, Ray Napper had run Napper's Boxing Club at great cost to himself both monetarily and in terms of the time commitment that he made to youngsters and what have now become generations of boxers, including Tom Glesby, Canadian national heavyweight champion.

Nobody was ever denied access to Napper's Boxing Club because they didn't have any money, because Ray would take care of any kid who wandered through those doors. In a gentle, avuncular style that one may not normally associate with the sport of boxing, Ray cultivated and nurtured young men and young women to become strong and capable athletes, to become good sportsmen and to become committed members of their community.

Ray, as we know, coached two Canadian national boxing teams at the Olympics, both in Spain and in Korea. He nurtured the careers of many young boxers. I

want to express on behalf of this assembly, on behalf of the province, our sympathies to his family, to his friends. He will certainly be missed but he has left a great legacy.

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford): I want to take this time as well, Speaker, for the first time in the Legislature to congratulate you on winning the Speaker's chair and your personal re-election in Simcoe East.

It gives me a great deal of pride and pleasure today to inform my colleagues on both sides of the House that Brantford was recently awarded and won the 1995 Communities in Bloom competition.

For those who haven't heard about Communities in Bloom, it's a national competition for communities of a certain size and population that really vie for bragging rights to have the most beautiful community and the community with the most community spirit.

We beat out, by the way, other communities in the 30,000 to 100,000 population category, including Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; Saint-Léonard, Quebec; Brandon, Manitoba; and Lethbridge, Alberta. I think that's a significant achievement not only for Brantford but for the entire province of Ontario.

Certainly this accomplishment would not have been possible without the fine work of our mayor and city council. However, there's an example of a person in my community by the name of Margaret Howe who together with her brigade of volunteers seized the opportunity and went out and cleaned up parts of the city which otherwise would have gone unattended. It's that kind of initiative that really stands for the true meaning of community spirit in this province.

Congratulations also to the parks board of Brantford.

I can tell you that the people of Brantford have always known the wonderful community that we live in. We've taken some hard knocks economically in the past, but winning this competition comes as a vindication of the kind of spirit and drive that prevails in Brantford.

AGRICULTURAL FUNDING

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): With \$20 billion worth of value added agricultural sales, the Liberal Party recognizes that agriculture is crucial to Ontario's economy. In fact, it is the second-largest industry in Ontario after the automotive industry. As a farmer and the Liberal Agriculture co-critic, I intend to be a strong voice for agriculture, to speak for the farmers who represent only 2% of the population, yet are responsible for such a huge contribution to our economic wellbeing.

When the NDP assault on agriculture reduced agricultural spending by 14% and reduced agriculture's share of the provincial budget by 25%, the Tory revolution document promised, and I will read this directly, "Under

a Mike Harris government, agriculture will regain its fair share of government support." It's right in here for everyone to see.

Just over a year ago, Mr Premier, you stood in this House, and I would like to remind you of your words. You said, "In the Common Sense Revolution, we call for no cuts to agriculture: not a single nickel." You reiterated that promise over and over during the campaign.

This is a betrayal, Premier and Minister of Agriculture, a betrayal and a breach of trust. You may have a majority in this House, but as long as I am here I won't let you forget your broken promises.

1340

NORTHERN HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Today, I would like to direct my statement to the Minister of Transportation. Recently, I heard the Ministry of Transportation plans to cut the use of snowplows and sanders in the north. This is an essential service. Northern highways during the winter months need to be clear and safe.

The plans, I understand, are to reduce plowing by a quarter and sanding by 30%. Highway 11 will remain a priority, but Highway 655 linking Driftwood to Timmins and Highway 634 connecting Smooth Rock Falls to Fraserdale will be cleared only after the Trans-Canada route has been cleared. Route 631 between Hornepayne and Highway 11 would also be affected.

With these reductions, we'd be looking at a disastrous scenario in the north. The clearance of Highways 655, 631 and 634 is a priority. Even in the north, life must go on.

Lives will be placed on the line, including young lives. Babies are not delivered in Smooth Rock Falls; they are delivered in Timmins. If the roads are not cleared and the planes cannot fly, pregnant women would be in a predicament indeed.

We already have two or three deaths a year on the road in northern Ontario due to hazardous driving conditions. No doubt more lives will be at risk. There needs to be a more reasoned approach to trimming government spending. Cutting the budget and risking lives is not an approach that would be taken by a responsible government.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): I wish to draw the attention of the House to the previous government's labour legislation, Bill 40.

Already, small business owners from Lanark-Renfrew are writing to me requesting that I, as a government member, stay the course and help repeal this divisive, job-destroying bill. During the election, many business people in my riding spoke out against the former government's bill. Now the people of Lanark-Renfrew want to ensure that their newly elected government does as it promised.

Furthermore, I wish to reassure my constituents that we are going to restore balance to Ontario's labour laws. We are going to do what is right for the hardworking people of Lanark-Renfrew. We are going to repeal Bill 40.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): This summer, Mike Harris and the Conservative government began to dismantle many things. There's one thing they've been extremely successful at dismantling, and that's their own credibility.

Remember Mike Harris's promise to protect health care spending? Gone. The Conservatives have chopped \$132 million from the health budget and the government is said to be looking at another \$2 billion in health cuts and 32 hospital closures across the province.

Remember the Premier's promise to spare seniors and disabled from his knife? Gone. The Conservatives have targeted seniors and the disabled for massive cuts. Wheel-Trans has already been chopped, and the cabinet is now considering gutting the seniors' prescription drug program.

Do you remember Mike Harris's promise to protect funding to law enforcement and justice budgets? Gone. The Conservatives have already cut \$14 million from the budgets of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General; this while Conservative cuts to municipalities promise to eat into the budgets of police forces right across this province.

Do you remember that government's promise to find work for people on welfare? Gone. The Conservatives have no jobs for those on welfare and no plans to give them a hand up, just advice on how to buy tuna.

Gone with these and many other Conservative promises is the credibility Mike Harris promised when he said, "If I fail to deliver on my commitments as Premier, I'll resign." Shame on you. Shame on the government.

DREDGING OF LAKE ONTARIO

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I wish to bring to the attention of members of this House a proposal by a company named Bedrock Resources. This proposal is to dredge sand from the bottom of Lake Ontario. The proposed area for dredging is located due south of my constituency of Beaches-Woodbine.

Our community's major concerns, in addition to the complete lack of public input thus far on the proposal, are, firstly, the possible contamination of our drinking water and that the supply for all of Metro Toronto is at risk. The dredging is very close to the intake pipe for the R.H. Harris water filtration plant, which of course supplies all of Metro Toronto.

Secondly, the 54 million tons of lake bottom that we're talking about that would be dredged is possibly playing a very important role in the management of toxins in the lake bottom, and the resuspension of toxins is definitely a threat to our environment and to our public health.

Third, the threat of erosion, to the beach shoreline certainly but also to the very sensitive land structures of the Scarborough Bluffs, is an issue for consideration.

The heavy schedule of dredging, the noise, the visual pollution and the water safety are all issues that need to be examined, and of course the potential impact on the community's recreational amenities, fish habitats and waterfront regeneration projects.

The Minister of Natural Resources has received a letter from me detailing all of these concerns and I request him to respond as soon as possible. This project is not appropriate to an area where so many people, as well as the environment, will be negatively affected by its implementation.

Public awareness has heightened. The city of Toronto and Metro have both rejected this proposal, and I urge the minister to stop it now.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): Yesterday, I had the pleasure of sponsoring and speaking at the Community Health Fair on the front lawns of the Legislature. It was sponsored by the Association of Ontario Health Centres and launched the second annual Community Health Week.

This year's theme is entitled Taking Back Our Health. In other words, in the words of the executive director of the association: "Meaningful health reform can only be achieved through the active involvement of individuals, families and communities. [This] is an urgent call for community responsibility, action and self-reliance in the matter of life and health."

Over 50 agencies, including community health centres, presented information about the important factors that affect our health.

Community health centres are the kind of innovative organizations that this government wants to encourage. Community health centres have strong community involvement, high volunteer participation and foster partnership with other non-profit and charitable groups from outside government.

Many of the community health centres have also been leaders in making maximum use of their limited resources, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them on their outstanding contributions to our community.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from Serra San Bruno, Calabria, Italy, headed by His Worship Mayor Mr Nazzareno Salerno. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a copy of an order in council appointing the following members as commissioners to the Board of Internal Economy:

The Speaker, who shall be chair;

The Honourable David J. Johnson, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from among the members of the executive council:

The Honourable Robert Runciman, Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from among the members of the executive council;

The Honourable Noble A. Villeneuve, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from among the members of the executive council;

Isabel Basset, MPP, appointed by the caucus of the government;

Elinor Caplan, MPP, appointed by the caucus of the official opposition;

David Cooke, MPP, appointed by the caucus of the New Democratic Party of Ontario.

1350

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

JOB CREATION MEASURES

Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): A priority of this government is to restore Ontario to its former position as a place of opportunity and growth. We are very mindful of the need to increase the opportunity for employment in Ontario.

My background has taught me that government does not create jobs. But there is a great deal government can do to encourage job creation: by removing barriers to economic growth; by helping to shape the environment in which businesses and jobs flourish; by improving the ability for us to compete more effectively in an extremely competitive global marketplace.

Today my colleagues and I will be announcing some of the measures we are taking to facilitate job creation. My colleague the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations will introduce amendments to the Corporations Information Act that will revoke the annual \$50 filing fee which, I might add, will reduce red tape, and this is clearly a barrier to business and job growth.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): A major barrier. Major barrier.

Hon Mr Saunderson: It is.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Hon Mr Saunderson: My colleague the Minister of Environment and Energy will announce measures to freeze for five years the average rate charged for electricity by Ontario Hydro.

Finally, my colleague the Minister of Transportation will announce new legislation under the Ontario railways act to encourage investors to establish and to operate shortline railways in Ontario.

Combined, these initiatives further demonstrate our commitment to further expand employment opportunities in our province and put our economy back on a course to full recovery.

CORPORATION FILING PROGRAM

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Later today I will be introducing for first reading amendments to the Corporations Information Act. As one of the first orders of business of our government, I am delighted to inform members of the House that we are acting on our election commitment that the annual \$50 filing fee imposed on Ontario corporations will be eliminated. This will be

retroactive to July 1, 1995, five days after we took office.

We have also suspended the current annual return filing cycle, which runs from July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1996. Beginning on January 1, 1997, corporations will file basic corporate information with the Ministry of Finance along with their corporate tax filing.

The Finance ministry will then transmit the corporate public record information back to the companies branch in my ministry.

This is great news for many corporations. It means filing with just one ministry, not two. It also means fewer administrative costs, less paperwork and even less dealings with the government. It's good for Ontario, good for job creation and especially good for small business.

Of the approximately 400,000 corporations registered on the public record, 300,000 will give us corporate information through their corporate tax return. The other 100,000, which don't file a corporate tax return, will file a corporate annual return with the Ministry of Finance but without a fee.

I'd like to add that as a result of this new integrated data collection program, this province will have the most streamlined reporting process of all Canadian jurisdictions and will be the only province in all of Canada without an annual filing fee.

We believe this is an important step towards simplifying the filing processes in Ontario. It's also an example of this government's commitment to streamline all its operations and procedures.

In summary, for the great majority of companies in our province this amendment will mean a reporting process combining forms and filing and with no fee. I urge all members to support this bill, which cuts red tape and duplication, which I will introduce later today.

HYDRO RATE FREEZE

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): It gives me great pleasure to share with my colleagues in the Legislature today an important action this government has taken with respect to Ontario Hydro electricity rates.

For many years we have enjoyed relatively low-cost electricity. However, this changed in the late 1980s and the early 1990s as Ontario Hydro's financial situation worsened. As a matter of fact, between 1988 and 1993 electricity prices rose 36.3%. Simply put, Ontario Hydro's competitive edge had been allowed to slide.

Some large industrial consumers and municipal utilities threatened to buy electricity from other suppliers. Some businesses threatened to move out of the province. Residential consumers were hit hard and no longer believed they were getting top value for their dollar.

This government understands the need for stable energy prices. Today, through the Ministry of Environment and Energy, we are taking another step towards ending the era of spiralling expenses.

In the Common Sense Revolution we promised a fiveyear freeze on the rates Ontario Hydro charges its customers. Today we are making good on that commitment. Last Wednesday, as announced in the throne speech, I advised Ontario Hydro chair Maurice Strong of the government's decision. We are holding Ontario Hydro accountable for ensuring no increases in its average rate between January 1, 1996, and December 31, 2000.

With this announcement our message is clear: Ontario is open for business; Ontario is offering unprecedented stability. To employers and industry, to families struggling to balance the household books and to young adults juggling bills as they strike out on their own, the message is clear: We are listening.

Taking inflation into account, we anticipate an average 15% reduction in the price Ontario Hydro customers will pay for electricity. This is good news for the municipal utilities, for large industries and for the rural customers who buy electricity directly from Ontario Hydro.

We are counting on our partners in the municipal electrical system to support our efforts by holding down their costs and rates. In doing so, they will pass on the benefits of the rate freeze to their residential customers.

We recognize that Ontario Hydro already has cut costs to become more competitive, and we fully expect the utility to continue to look for new ways to further reduce its average rate during the five-year period.

We also appreciate the need to ensure that Ontario Hydro can maintain its financial soundness and meet its debt obligations. To this end, Ontario Hydro will retain the flexibility to adjust to changed market conditions or unforeseen circumstances.

Stable electricity rates are essential to creating a thriving business climate in this province, and they are essential to Ontarians who need and deserve a solid foundation on which to build for the future. This five-year freeze will help restore Ontario's competitive edge and put Ontario in great shape to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

1400

SHORTLINE RAILWAYS

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I rise today to introduce legislation that will remove one of the major roadblocks to the creation of shortline railways in Ontario. This legislation will make it easier to start a shortline rail service in Ontario. It will free up the private sector to create jobs.

Short lines give us a way to keep freight moving by rail. With their small, flexible workforces and low operating costs they can tailor their service to shippers' needs. Above all, they are the way the rail industry is moving in the 1990s.

Ontario's railway laws were last updated in 1950. The world some 45 years later is a much different place. Today shortline operators face a maze of rules and regulations. Ontario's current laws make it time-consuming, expensive and risky to set up a short line.

Investors are interested in doing business in Ontario. They believe they can run these short lines at a profit, and so do we. We will help them by removing barriers to business. This will allow them to do what they do best: create jobs. Together with the measures announced by my colleagues this legislation will help make Ontario's economy stronger.

JOB CREATION MEASURES

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I was disappointed in the minister's initial statement. I was quite pleased when I heard he was going to be making a statement. I thought maybe he would address some of the shortcomings of the speech from the throne. When you consider that trade constitutes one third of the total economy of Ontario and there wasn't even a mention of it in the throne speech, I was anticipating that maybe I would have heard something about that today.

Instead the minister made a statement in which he said his colleagues and he would be announcing measures. I kept looking. I looked on both sides. There are no measures that he announced. He was acting as a master of ceremonies for his other colleagues, and I would hope that in the future, when he's going to stand in this House, he will have a more meaningful role rather than announce what his other ministers are going to say.

CORPORATION FILING PROGRAM

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): To the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations: We acknowledge with interest and pleasure that you have taken an important step in simplifying the filing fee and reducing the cost of \$50. It's only a surprise to me that you didn't announce that you were going to have a 1-800 number—1-800-NOFEE—but in any event I suspect corporations will find this in due course. I would hope that the minister will continue on this course to practise the 3Rs with regulations, that is, to review, reduce and rescind.

JOB CREATION MEASURES

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I'm glad that the short-line railway announcement was made, but the thing I have trouble digesting is that this has been in the guise of job creation. I wonder what the net job creation is when you take into account that this minister has taken away 18,000 jobs from subway construction in Metro, has gutted GO expansion—you can't even get in and out of Union Station—and then the disabled transit across this province is being gutted. How many jobs were lost there, and what do you net out with this minor announcement here?

HYDRO RATE FREEZE

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Concerning the announcement today about a five-year freeze on Hydro rates, I'm sure the people of Ontario will be pleased to know that the new government has issued an instruction to carry forward the recent pattern of freezes on Hydro rates. I must say that Hydro rates are something that touch all of us in the Ontario community and in the Ontario economy. I repeat, I'm sure there is widespread approval across the province today for the commitment to maintain a zero increase through to the end of this decade and into the year 2000.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): However—

Mr Conway: However, I do note—and let me read from the statement—that the government appreciates "the need to ensure that Ontario Hydro can maintain its financial soundness and meet debt obligations. To this end, Ontario Hydro will retain the flexibility to adjust to changed market conditions or unforeseen circumstances

that may arise." That is the parachute clause that we should all note.

I think it also has to be observed that while the public, and certainly business, will be very pleased to see this five-year freeze, there is also an expectation that the government and the crown corporation are going to maintain a utility that is reliable in terms of its service.

There is clearly a very deep-seated concern at the Atomic Energy Control Board, the federal regulator, about the safety performance of certain of Ontario Hydro's installations in this province. Honourable members will know that in recent weeks there have been reports from the AECB which raise very serious and legitimate concerns about the safety performance of some of our nuclear reactors. The question is being raised, not just by the federal regulator but by others in the province and country, as to what is being sacrificed in terms of safety at Ontario Hydro in these deliberations.

So let me say that we are pleased to see measures taken to moderate rates but we expect that the government and the utility will ensure that there is a reliability of service and, most especially, that the safety of Hydro workers and Ontario citizens will be in no way jeopardized as we move forward to control costs.

JOB CREATION MEASURES

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I rise to begin our response to the statements by the ministers across. I have to say that we know the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism comes to this place with a fairly good business reputation. So I think it's startling, to say the least, that he begins a statement around job creation and does not reiterate this government's commitment to the 725,000 jobs. I think it is therefore a very telling conclusion that we can come to, that this government has abandoned that commitment. I think that time will confirm that in fact they have done just that because, again, what a terrific opportunity for them to reiterate that commitment in what purports to be a major statement on job creation.

We don't believe that the attitude that this government is taking, of simply abandoning the field, of simply getting out of the way, is going to create the kinds of jobs that we need in this province. We believe that what you need is a partnership between government, business and labour working together, as we did, to create jobs.

That is what I think this government will find as they develop their ultra laissez-faire approach, that they will not create the jobs and people will be hurt because of the mean-spirited approach that they are taking of removing, one after the other, protections that are there for workers, structures that have been built up through the labour legislation of this province, through the health and safety protections of this province, to create a balance in the work environment that says that government does play a role in working together with business in creating a healthy climate.

That is the way you create jobs in this province, that is what's missing from this government and that is what will come back to haunt them, when the jobs they have committed themselves to and that they are now reneging

on today will come back to haunt them.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): Job creation. Yeah, sure. That's about as believable as the proposition that the O.J. jury wasn't in a hurry to get home. This has nothing to do with job creation. This has a whole lot to do with piecing off the corporate world, piecing off the Tories' good buddies on Bay Street. They don't know who small businesses is. Down in Welland-Thorold small businesses aren't incorporated; they're mom-and-pop operations.

These guys have the audacity to impose user fees on the sick, to cut the welfare rates of the poor and their children, to impose user fees on every other sector of the taxpaying society, to ignore the unemployed, and then they give this little giveaway to their corporate buddies and they don't expect the corporate world to accept some of the financial responsibility for maintaining a registry system that, in large part, is consumer protection in device and orientation. That's an abandonment of consumers and that's a piece-off to the corporate world. Shame.

HYDRO RATE FREEZE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): To the Minister of Environment and Energy, I, on behalf of our caucus, would also like to say that we're very happy to hear that you are following through with the NDP's commitment to freeze rates. That was not in your statement; you cut it off somewhere way back there.

I do want to point out to people—I have two documents here. One is the famous Common Sense Revolution and the other is the throne speech, and also your document of today.

If you will look in the Common Sense Revolution, you will see that it says, "A five-year freeze will be placed on Hydro rates." In your statement today and in the throne speech, it says a "commitment to freeze the average rates charged by Ontario Hydro." I would ask the minister exactly what this means. I think it means that there's going to be a freeze on rates for some people and not for others.

There are also implications of privatization that she did not get into today. We'd be very interested to hear from her on what she's talking about.

1410

JOB CREATION MEASURES

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): In response to the statement by the Minister of Transportation, this is a precursor of what's about to happen. The people opposite have made the decision to gut labour legislation. The result will be that workers will be left twisting in the wind. They'll be put on the human junk pile.

And yes, there are alternatives. Invite people vis-à-vis shortline establishment to negotiate, to compromise, to establish an equilibrium—not, with respect, your extreme position, which indeed will come back to haunt you bigtime in the not too distant future. Those people who are being discarded are the producers of wealth—they're referred to as the middle class, who pay for all this—and you're about to turn your back on them and to toss them away. Shame on you, Minister.

ORAL QUESTIONS HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Premier. Premier, over the last few days you and the Minister of Health have been talking about the challenge that you face in protecting what you have called your \$17.4-billion commitment to health care. You said it would be, and I quote, "a tremendous challenge to maintain health care funding at \$17.4 billion." You said, however, that your party was committed to the \$17.4-billion envelope for health care.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance tabled the 1994-95 public accounts. They show that health care spending last year actually totalled \$17.8 billion. Premier, if the Ministry of Health's budget was \$17.848 billion, why are you talking about a \$17.4-billion budget, unless you are intending to cut health care by over \$400 million? Will you confirm whether you are indeed intending to reduce health care funding by \$484 million?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the figure of 17.4 is the one we have used, the commitment we made to the people of Ontario. If you want to get into specifics, I'll refer that to the Minister of Health.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Obviously the Premier has the opportunity to refer, but he doesn't have the opportunity to answer and then refer. I just ask you to enforce the rules.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The Minister of Health.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The honourable member asks a very good question—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: —and if I could hear myself think, perhaps I could answer the question for the leader of the official opposition.

I'd refer the leader of the official opposition to the 1994-95 estimates of the Ministry of Health, in which it very clearly says that the health care budget is \$17,395,-992,407. At the time we wrote the Common Sense Revolution, we sealed the health care budget at slightly above that, at \$17.4 billion.

That commitment remains in place, and I will be happy in supplementaries to explain the well over \$300 million worth of overspending that the previous government got itself into since the estimates were drawn up and during the recent campaign—

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Wilson: —where they went around this province committing dollars—

The Speaker: Order. Would the minister take his seat, please. Supplementary?

Mrs McLeod: I keep doing my best, in these first questions, to give the Premier an opportunity to take responsibility for commitments he made to the people of this province, but since he has referred the question to the Minister of Health—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mrs McLeod: Since the Premier has referred this question to the Minister of Health, I say to the Minister of Health and to the Premier that the numbers are absolutely clear: \$17.848 billion was the 1994-95 budget for health care spending, according to the Provincial Auditor. Those are real numbers for real funding that went to real health care services out in the communities.

There is no reason why there should be a difference between your commitment and what was actually spent on health care when you talk about freezing, sealing an envelope, because the May 1995 version of the Revolution came out after the previous government had presented its budget plan, and that budget plan clearly showed a budget of at least \$17.7 billion for this year and for last year. That is consistent with the numbers that were tabled in yesterday's public accounts prior to the change to new accounting.

I believe that the taxpayers deserve a very straight answer from this government. You said that you would not cut health care. You knew that the health care budget was \$17.7 billion or better. Do you not consider a \$484-million reduction in health care funding to be a cut to health care services?

Hon Mr Wilson: At the time of the writing of the Common Sense Revolution, in May 1994, the health care budget was \$17.4 billion. At that time, the former Treasurer indicated to this House that the health care budget was to be flat-lined, if not reduced by 1%. What the previous government did was run into several hundred million dollars worth of overspending that they did not intentionally spend; the fundamentals of the budget are fully preserved.

Overspending, for example, with respect to the long-term-care facilities, where they undercollected on the revenues—they brought in \$150 million worth of new user fees or copayments in the long-term-care facilities and did not collect that. Therefore, the government's estimates show they should have had that money. They didn't. It was overspent. There's \$40 million worth of irresponsible overspending on the drug side, which, by the way, is being carried forward year after year after year. So this is not \$40 million on drugs, which they carry forward year after year after year after year

The Speaker: Could the minister wrap up his answer, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: I will continue the list, particularly with respect to physicians' services, where the government did not live with the budget it set out—

The Speaker: Order. Supplementary?

Mrs McLeod: I look forward to reviewing the minister's answer in Hansard and determining just who it is he's claiming has made this irresponsible spending on drugs, who it is who determines it's irresponsible. I think as we begin to examine a little bit of the minister's answer, we may get some sense of where in fact they are going to make the cuts to health care service, because it is quite clear they are making cuts to health care service. A cut is a cut. You've said that you are using the

\$17.4-billion envelope for health care. That means you are going to be cutting some \$484 million from the current health care budget. Little by little over the last few days we've seen some of the reductions you're prepared to make to health care services, whether it is funding for birthing centres or home care or indeed the Ontario drug benefit plan.

Minister, I ask you today to come absolutely clean with the people of this province. Since you've acknowledged you're going to be cutting health care services, will you give us some details of where those health care services are going to be cut, what is going to be affected? Do you not feel the public has a right to know?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member asks a good question. Perhaps I could be clearer. All members are aware that currently this government is charged with collecting over \$200 million in overspending, in overpayments to physicians of this province. We are budgeting our health care budget to live within the fiscal envelope that we promised the people of Ontario. We have overspending out there which those line items that the member refers to in the estimates show.

I hope the honourable member isn't saying that somehow I should forgive \$225 million to physicians in overspending which is now being recovered under the NDP social contract legislation. I hope you're not saying that when nurses and front-line hospital workers and teachers and everyone else in the broader public sector paid their social contract contributions—I hope you're not telling me today to forgive the physicians the \$225 million that they owe to this government as part of the previous government's social contract legislation. That shows as an overspending on the books. We're going to recover that and we're going to stick to the \$17.4 billion we committed to with the people of Ontario.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, if we could get a budget from this government backed by estimates, we'd know what we could suggest about what this government is doing.

1420

CLOSURE OF HALFWAY HOUSES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My second question follows from that and it is a question to the Solicitor General. Last week the Chairman of Management Board announced that the government had exceeded its savings targets and had in fact found excess savings. What he failed to mention on that particular day was any detail of what the savings would be and how they would affect the people of this province. Little by little, we are finding out where those savings are being achieved.

Today we have learned from Joan Winchell, who is the executive director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel, that the Solicitor General has sent notice that he is closing Ontario's 25 halfway houses. We understand that letters have been sent today to the agencies that operate these facilities to tell them that they will be closed in 90 days.

I ask the Solicitor General, will you confirm that this is the case, that you are closing all of the 25 halfway

houses and that you are sending the residents back to iail?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I will confirm what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. We are informing the operators of the CRCs in this province that at the end of their contracts we will no longer be continuing with their services.

Mrs McLeod: I believe that this minister, as a minister of the crown, has a responsibility to do more than just follow the blindfolded direction of the revolution; he also has a responsibility to the people of this province. One of the responsibilities is to tell them what it is he is doing as Solicitor General and how his actions will affect their communities and the safety of their communities.

I don't know, Minister, when you were planning to come to this House and make an announcement that would tell the public that you were taking this action. Perhaps you would be prepared to tell us at least what the impact will be of closing these halfway houses, which provide the counselling and support that people need in order to make a successful transition to the community. How many more repeat offenders are we likely to see? What will the increased jail costs be as you send the residents back to jail? What will the increased cost to police budgets be? These are questions that you have a responsibility to answer, Minister, and the public has a right to answers today.

Hon Mr Runciman: Our public announcements were going to be made following consultation and notification of the affected agencies.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The member for Essex South is out of order.

Hon Mr Runciman: That notification is taking place today, and there will be approximately a 90-day period in terms of the closures taking place. We're talking about approximately 400, at the most, offenders who are utilizing these facilities.

We're also announcing today an alternative in respect to how we're going to deal with low-risk offenders in the province with the initiation of an electronic monitoring system to be brought in very early in the new year.

Mrs McLeod: It is totally unacceptable that the minister gives notice to the agencies providing the service only after the media discover that he has already made that decision, and he still does not come to this Legislature and make that announcement so that the public is fully aware of what he is doing.

Minister, I also want to take you back to a commitment that was made, a commitment in the Revolution document that says, on page 8, "funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed."

As I understand a guarantee, or whatever the term used to mean, I think it would mean that there would be no cuts to law enforcement and to justice. You have just cut \$11 million from law enforcement and justice, and that is another broken promise. We have just the cut. We have no alternative; we have no reinvestment. Are you going

to claim today that the money is somehow going to be reinvested, even though the Minister of Finance is already using that money to reduce his deficit or will you acknowledge that this is another cut and another broken promise?

Hon Mr Runciman: I won't acknowledge that at all. In fact, this is a tougher way of dealing with offenders in society. We're going to be monitoring them on a 24-hour basis. We also are implementing a very tough and rigid risk assessment with respect to people who will be allowed out on electronic monitoring. We're only going to allow individuals who pose no risk to society; very strict criteria in respect to who can qualify for the use of electronic monitoring anklets.

I feel quite comfortable with the changes we're making. Our commitment has always been to public safety, unlike the Liberals, who have come new to this issue in the last couple of years.

The Speaker: Leader of the third party.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): To the Solicitor General: In light of how comfortable the Solicitor General feels with this decision, I wonder if the Solicitor General can please tell us, after all his time in opposition when he would complain about statements being made outside the House and everywhere else, why isn't he in the House today making a statement with respect to this cut?

Hon Mr Runciman: I appreciate the leader of the third party's comments, although certainly it's not a policy his government followed and indeed we did complain on a consistent basis about the practice adopted by the ministers of the crown during his government, who virtually always failed to make announcements in this Legislature.

I can't address the leaks that got out in terms of people being informed, but I want to say—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Runciman: —it was certainly the intention of this government and this ministry to ensure that all of the affected agencies and individuals and employees were informed prior to me making a statement in this House. That was always the intention of this government.

Mr Rae: The minister is in government now and he has to take responsibility for the fact that his government has cut \$11 million, it would appear—we don't have any facts and figures in front of us; we only know what we've also been told—some \$11 million from his budget, which is a complete break of the promise the government made with respect to law enforcement. I think we're entitled to at least ask the minister, can he tell us whether as a result of this measure he anticipates that people who are now in halfway houses will be going back to jail?

Hon Mr Runciman: Yes, they will be going back to jail. The intent is that following the completion of the contracts, all the offenders will be reincarcerated. As I said, we have developed very strict criteria in respect to the types of individuals who can qualify for electronic monitoring. As well, they're going to be subjected to a very rigid risk assessment so we can ensure that any individuals who are allowed out into the communities on

electronic monitoring as a replacement for CRCs will pose virtually no risk to society.

Mr Rae: The Solicitor General is not presenting us with any facts or with any information with respect to what's taking place. There's no review of the impacts; no review in terms of the impacts on public safety, people coming right out of prison right back on to the street without any effort at integration, any effort at education, any effort at giving people a chance to get a job, any effort at getting people back—just keep them in jail and then put a prod on them and that'll be the answer to the problem.

I'd like to ask the Solicitor General, can he tell us today the comparative cost of keeping an individual incarcerated in prison compared to the cost of keeping them in a halfway house? Can you tell us that today?

Hon Mr Runciman: Our intent is not to keep them in jail, in terms of the individuals who qualify.

This system, in terms of electronic monitoring, has been in use in 50 states across the US. It's used by British Columbia, it's used by Nova Scotia, it's used by Roy Romanow in Saskatchewan, and we feel quite comfortable with the process.

1430

We're talking about a pilot project. We're talking about, at the most, 400 offenders who are currently occupying the CRCs. We're not talking about a massive project here.

We believe this is going to be a tougher system in terms of 24-hour continuous monitoring of these individuals when they're in the community. We're adopting very strict criteria in terms of the individuals who will be allowed out so that they pose no risk to the community, and I feel very comfortable with it. I'm very comfortable with the fact that we're keeping our commitments in respect of public safety.

Mr Rae: The fact that the minister feels comfortable is something that gives many of us a great deal of concern.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Community and Social Services. I'd like to ask the Minister of Community and Social Services, when was the last time he bought tuna at 69 cents a tin?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I guess this is a lesson on economics.

I also apologize again. I still have a touch of laryngitis. *Interjections*.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Thank you for the sympathy.

To the leader of the third party, there are many places where you can buy tuna for 69 cents. In fact, even if it's not priced at 69 cents, quite often you can make a deal to get it for 69 cents.

Mr Rae: Since the minister is now on record as saying that he himself has gone and bought tuna for 69 cents a tin, I'm sure he'd like to tell everybody where that is.

I'd like to ask him by way of supplementary, in response to his answer, which I can honestly say I was not anticipating so I do not have a text for this, but I'd like to ask him, when was the last time he bartered for food?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: These are very interesting questions today and I thank the leader of the third party for them.

I think the whole object here is to look and see whether or not we're looking at the rate cuts. Obviously this is what the leader of the third party is getting at. We strongly believe that we have reduced the rates to 10% above the average in the other provinces. With all due respect, I think the leader of the third party is really asking whether or not it's possible to buy food on this type of a budget.

I would be happy to share with the leader of the third party perhaps not the entire text of this but certainly afterwards I can share this with you. I had some research done to indicate how and whether or not someone who is a sole single on benefits or a single parent with a child—we've actually provided a budget here. Someone had asked me that before, whether or not someone can budget for this. I have it here in this binder. I'd be willing to share this with the leader of the third party.

Mr Rae: I'd love to have it. I'd love to have a copy and I'd like to share it with all the working parents of this province. I'd like to share it with the women and children who are out there now. I'd like to know what you and your ministry and the cabinet think is enough to live on. I think the people of this province would like to know what that is, and I'd like to hear from them, because I trust their judgement a whole lot more than I trust yours or the cabinet's on the basis of what it takes to live in this province. Their experience is much more eloquent than your data.

By way of final supplementary, the minister's aware that under the existing way of life for people on social assistance there are 100,000 people on social assistance who are now working in the STEP program. I wonder if the minister can explain why those people who are now working—not the ones that you've ordered to go out and get a job, not the ones that you've told should go out and get a job, the people who are now working—why, for example, for a single person who's working, their rate has gone from \$842.85 to \$769.85 and why a single parent with one child who's working under the STEP program is going from \$1,721.95 to \$1,393.69. Why, even in the world of your own tellings, of your own truths, of your own pieties, would you be punishing who have already taken your advice and have gone out and gotten a job? Why are you punishing those people as well? You're punishing everybody in the province.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: First of all, our government is committed to breaking the cycle of dependency and giving people the incentive to get back to work. With all due respect once again, our commitment was to make sure that people have the opportunity to earn back the difference between the old base rate and the new base rate. We're not taking about programs to enhance income, which obviously the leader of the third party is right now.

So I don't have to explain this, because once again we strongly believe that by reducing the rates 10% above the average of the other provinces, not at the average of the other provinces but 10% above, certainly this is going to be sufficient.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Official opposition, new question.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, this is a can of tuna—it is dented—for \$1.09. If you can tell me where you can get a dented can for 69 cents, please let me know because we'll buy it. Take a close look at it—not 69 cents, \$1.09 at every store where you can get it.

The Speaker: Was that your question?

Mr Agostino: No, it's not. Minister, in the throne speech, in the House yesterday, yourself, the Premier, stated that welfare recipients could earn back the amount of money you reduced without a penalty, a clawback or a reduction. Minister, this information is inaccurate; it is dead wrong; it is a myth.

In fact, this government by its policies is punishing people on welfare who want to work. You're penalizing people who you encourage to go out and get a job and then the clawback does not allow them to earn the amount of money that you've cut from them.

Minister, you know your statements are wrong. You do not understand the system. You do not understand your own ministry regulations. How can you make changes to the act without a common understanding of what you're doing? How can such punishing changes take place when the minister does not understand the social assistance system in Ontario?

The Speaker: The question's been asked.

Mr Agostino: I ask you to admit to the House today that the information in the throne speech that you gave, that the Premier gave, was wrong. Will you commit to changing the regulations for people with jobs to earn it back?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It's difficult to pick a question out of all that rhetoric. But, once again, with a little bit of work the people in this province have the opportunity to earn back the difference between the old rate and the new rate. Once again, I have to say that what we have done is remove disincentives for people to get back to work. It's very important for people to get off this cycle of dependency, and this is what this is intended to do.

Mr Agostino: Again, the minister by that answer has shown us once again that he does not understand his own regulations, does not understand the comments he made yesterday. Minister, yesterday you said people can earn back the amount you cut without a penalty or a clawback clause.

The reality is, with a single person, a single parent with one child or a couple with two children, in every single case the clawback clause kicks in before the reduction so therefore they will be reduced the amount of money that they can earn before you take away from them. You allow people after the clawback to keep 25% of what they earn. Before that happens, the reduction is

already greater than you have anticipated.

Minister, the information you gave is wrong. You're not addressing the question again. These misguided and uninformed decisions are causing the hardship, the pain and the chaos in Ontario today. What province do we live in? What irrational decisions is the government going to make today?

Again I ask you, Minister, can you clarify your statements of yesterday, where you stated that the clawback clause you have in your regulations to allow people to earn back what you have deducted from them—because the facts do not bear that out. Change your regulations and make consistent what you and the Premier have said in the House.

1440

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): Just say yes.

Interjection: Who's asking you the question?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Yes, is this the second question? I will say this to the honourable member for Hamilton East: We are prepared to ensure that there is the flexibility in the system to make sure that everybody can earn back the difference without clawback. This is an assurance I will give to the member.

Secondly, I just want to repeat the message one more-

Mrs Caplan: Repeat that.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Would you like me to repeat that? Is that what you said? I will ensure that there is the flexibility there. We've had individual circumstances brought up prior to this date in the House. I've also asked that if these circumstances are brought to my attention, we will deal with them. I will give this House the assurance that everybody will be able to earn back, without clawback, the difference between the old rate and the new rate.

HOSPITAL FINANCING

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health. We are continuing to hear reports from various sources in the media and from within his own ministry and elsewhere that there are very substantial cuts coming in transfers to hospitals. Can I ask the minister very simply and very directly, is he actively considering cuts in transfers to hospitals?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The honourable member asks a good question. I think we've made it very clear throughout the campaign and prior to the campaign, and consistently since that time, that we are looking at all efficiencies, at all duplications, at all waste in the system, at every program. For the last 13 weeks I've been going through, line by line, the health care budget to try to find efficiencies.

No one in the six years that I've been involved in health care at the political level has ever said to me that \$17.4 billion isn't enough to spend on health care. It certainly is, and we compare among the highest in the world in our per capita spending.

But we made it very clear in sealing the health care budget at \$17.4 billion that the status quo was not an option and that we would look for efficiencies, we would look at better ways of managing the system and we would look at ending duplication, waste and fraud, and that's what we're doing.

Mr Laughren: I think the minister knows that we're not talking about waste and inefficiency. We're not talking about that kind of magnitude.

If the minister is not considering cuts of up to 20% for transfers, I wonder if he could explain why, in a release dated September 20 from Laurentian Hospital in Sudbury, there had been a meeting of chief financial officers, according to this release, around the middle of September at which they were told by a very senior official in the Ministry of Health—at the assistant deputy minister level, I understand—that they were going to have very, very substantial cuts coming, up to 20% for 1996, starting next year—and they have to be notified ahead of time, of course—and 10% per year for a couple of years after that.

So what I'm asking the minister is not whether or not he's trying to get waste out of the system. Of course, we're all trying to get waste out of the system; that's a given. What I'm asking him is, is he actively considering reductions of up to 20% in transfers to hospitals next year, and if so, how he thinks they can deal with that?

Hon Mr Wilson: The member points out a situation in his own area—Laurentian Hospital, Sudbury. Sudbury is a very good example of the restructuring that's being done by that local community, and I think the purpose of that restructuring is to save some dollars in the hospital system.

Where hospital administrators in Laurentian would get the idea of a magnitude of cuts that the member suggests—I have no idea where that would come from, and it certainly would not come from an assistant deputy minister or someone of the senior management team in my ministry.

RED HILL CREEK EXPRESSWAY

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): Mr Speaker, on behalf of all the residents high atop Hamilton Mountain I would like to extend our congratulations and best wishes to you upon your selection as Speaker for this 36th Parliament of Ontario, and likewise to all of my colleagues here in the House.

My question is for the honourable Minister of Transportation regarding the Red Hill Creek Expressway. There exists some confusion and misunderstanding in the regional municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth with respect to funding for the Red Hill Creek Expressway, and I'm wondering if the honourable minister would, once and for all, please clarify the government's position and intent regarding funding for this project.

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I would like to respond to our colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain. I am very much aware of his efforts, and the rest of our colleagues' from the area, about Red Hill Creek and I would like to definitely clarify once and for all how important this project is to the region of Hamilton-Wentworth. This government is committed to complete it.

I would like to say that within two weeks of being

appointed minister I met with the people of Hamilton-Wentworth to reaffirm the commitment that our Premier made prior to the election. This government has already kept many of its promises. We have taken on the responsibility of balancing the budget and completing this particular project. We will do both.

Mr Pettit: In the face of fiscal restraint, will the minister assure the people of Hamilton Mountain that he will give the Red Hill Creek Expressway his highest priority?

Hon Mr Palladini: Liberal and New Democratic governments left this province in a very deep spending crisis. This crisis had to be addressed immediately, so therefore we had to defer funding from 443 municipalities, including Hamilton-Wentworth.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Is the money there, Al? Hon Mr Palladini: I'm very happy to say—

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Don't send him home with that answer.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Hon Mr Palladini: All municipalities, I would like to assure, that whatever funds were deferred this year, they will be brought back next year. We will complete Red Hill Creek Expressway.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): My question is to the Minister of Housing. This is very simple: Yes or no, will you be abolishing rent control?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): To the member across, yes, eventually we will be eliminating rent control. But we are not going to affect rent control until such time as we have a tenants' protection act in place, something that provides protection to tenants. The present system is not working, I think everybody recognizes that it's not working and we intend to fix it.

Mr Curling: Mr Minister, having cancelled over 390 non-profit housing projects that would have brought on line some affordable housing and accommodation, and you're of course aware of the vacancy rate that now exists at a very, very low rate—the CMHC has put that out—our homeless population, as you know, is growing, and the preliminary response to this crisis by your government is to respond with a cutback on social assistance payments by over 21.6% across the board, which combined actually the increased rent of about 2.9% with the rent review process.

What we have seen is that all those questions of hope have now gone to despair in the struggle to achieve a decent, respectable standard of living. Mr Minister, I would ask that during this time of sharing, you might offer some advice to these people as to what they might do in order to salvage some dignity and respect in attempting to house themselves and their families in Thanksgiving time.

Hon Mr Leach: I quite frankly am a strong believer in the co-op housing program. I just don't think that it should be carried out on the backs of the hardworking taxpayers of Ontario. We have been encouraging all of the sponsors that were involved in the co-op housing program to go out and be able to get the bricks and mortar up and we'll provide the subsidies to the people of Ontario who need the help.

1450

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a question for the minister responsible for women's issues. During the election, the now Minister of Health said that he believed in a "seamless continuum of health care." Now, as a result of that statement, many women in my riding and across the province are very angry and very disappointed about the recent announcement to cut funding for the four birthing centres across Ontario. People feel betrayed.

We all know that at a time when we are reforming the system it is extremely important that we continue to move into—and I believe the minister has referred to that—providing community care. Don't tell me that it is not economic at this time. We know—the statistics are there that show us—that it saves money down the road, plus it gives women the choice they should have.

It's bad economics and it's bad health policy and it is sadly consistent with the actions of this government in terms of disproportionately hurting women and children in this province.

I ask the minister who is responsible for women's issues, and I know she cares, what she is saying around the cabinet table and what she is going to do about this very bad decision.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, with responsibility for Women's Issues): I don't want to disappoint my colleagues in the House in response to that question, but the Minister of Health and I have both conferred and it is his portfolio, so he will answer the question.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question is referred to the Minister of Health.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The question of birthing centres, I think, is properly put in the context of our wanting to ensure that there isn't duplication in the system. To build a birthing centre, particularly one of those birthing centres, down the street, or, as the project suggested, on the very property where a hospital is to be vacated—I refer to Sudbury—seems to me to be a complete waste of taxpayers' dollars.

I said to that particular group prior to the election being called that there is no way, if we form the government, that I'm going to build bricks and mortar on the same site of an existing building that the taxpayers have already paid for. So I hope the honourable member will give this government credit for being consistent and for wanting to very much ensure that we don't have duplication of services when we have very scarce dollars to spend.

Ms Churley: Of course, I'm disappointed that the minister responsible for women's issues was not able to respond, because I do believe that she at least secretly has a different perspective on this.

I say to the minister that hospitals are most likely

going to be restructured. I'd like to know if he is committing here today to free up space in those buildings to create free-standing birthing centres or not. What kind of restructuring is he looking at? But my other question here, which was to be directed at the minister responsible for women's issues, is, in general, what is happening? I wanted to hear her, and now I will ask you, Minister of Health, what you are doing as Minister of Health, along with the minister responsible for women's issues, about some of the cuts. What are you saying at the cabinet table to help protect the women and children in this province, who are disproportionately being hurt by these cuts? Children are losing welfare. They're going to go hungry. Some of them are going to be on the street. You're hurting kids who need day care.

The Speaker: Would the member wrap up her question, please.

Ms Churley: You're hurting kids who need special help. You're hurting kids and their families. I would like to know what the Minister of Health and what the minister responsible for women's issues are saying at that cabinet table to the Premier—

The Speaker: The question's been asked. Minister.

Ms Churley: —and the minister responsible for children in this province to make sure—

The Speaker: Order. Minister.

Hon Mr Wilson: My colleague the minister responsible for women's issues, I can assure you, confers with me often about these issues.

With respect to birthing centres, the member should know, because it's some of the good work that her government did do when it was in office, we now have 28 hospitals that are providing less invasive, more woman-centred, less medical-modelled, birthing-centre-type services within the bricks and mortar of a building that the people of Ontario have already paid for. That is and will continue to be a priority.

As you know, upon our coming to office we've continued the midwifery program. We will have more midwives coming on stream, and I look forward to integrating and continuing to integrate those midwives and those services as part of a fully integrated, multi-disciplinary team. The women of Ontario will be able to receive these services increasingly—

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

Hon Mr Wilson: —as the restructuring studies consider the need for birthing centres, but within buildings that we've already paid for.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Bill Vankoughnet (Frontenac-Addington): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and I too, on behalf of the people of Frontenac-Addington, wish to congratulate you and wish you the very best.

My question today is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Recently, the city of Kingston asked the minister to appoint a commissioner to review local government in the greater Kingston area. The minister has stated that he would like the city to meet with representatives of the other municipalities in the area to explore the issues and

offer, if possible, some local direction to a solution.

My question is, why does the Minister of Municipal Affairs believe that a local solution to local municipal government problems in the greater Kingston area has a chance to succeed?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Thank you very much to the member for that question. I know that he's been very involved and very interested in that subject. This government intends to give more autonomy to municipalities throughout the province of Ontario. With that, of course, they must accept responsibility. I'm sure that the elected individuals in the communities involved have been elected by the taxpayers in their communities to make decisions, and I'm sure that they're more than capable of getting together and coming up with a solution that will be acceptable to all concerned.

Mr Vankoughnet: I appreciate that answer. I would also like to ask the minister if he would in every way possible encourage all the local stakeholders to give every consideration to all possible aspects of local government reform in Frontenac county and Lennox and Addington county, as well as the city of Kingston and the three other municipalities that are directly involved.

Hon Mr Leach: Yes, I can give that assurance to the member. I can also advise the member that the first meeting of all the heads of the communities will take place later this week.

1500

EDUCATION POLICY

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. Mr Minister, you've been in your position now for just over three and a half months, and I'm sure you've had a chance to develop a set of priorities that relate to improving the quality of education across this province. Would you share those with us today, please?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the honourable member for his question. As the honourable member probably knows, this government came to office having made a commitment to the people of the province of Ontario to improve and enhance the quality of education in the province because it's so important to the future of the province and important to our students. We also promised the parents and the taxpayers of this province that we would do it with a better value than they have received to date, and that, sir, is the commitment of this government.

Mr Patten: I was hoping to hear from the minister that indeed he had some priorities. It seems to me that all we've heard is by way of the throne speech, cuts and limitations, the cutting of hearings, for example, that is going to hamper the wisdom of the people of Ontario for your consideration down the line. Let me ask again: Mr Minister, if indeed you have no priorities, what might be your legislative agenda?

Hon Mr Snobelen: We will be bringing forward legislation later this year to deal with such things that are so important to the people of the province of Ontario as testing and quality in education in the province. We look

forward to bringing that forward some time during this session.

I also might point out that we have asked the public of Ontario to respond to some of the reports that have come out. We've had an 800 number and a written-in response, and the public has been responding to those questions.

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES FUNDING

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and Natural Resources. First of all, congratulations on your re-election and your appointment to cabinet.

Recently, I had heard that the Minister of Natural Resources plans to cut another \$35 million from the ministry's budget, cutting 200 jobs and putting the natural resources of northern Ontario at risk, with the possible closing of nurseries and offices in small communities and reducing fire crews. As you are aware, fire has raged throughout northern Ontario and put our natural resources in a very disastrous position. Can the minister tell me what the plans are for further cuts in funding to the ministry, which has already been streamlined and is now a mean, lean organization?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines): I'd like to thank my honourable friend in the third party. We spent five weeks together last year, and it was an enjoyable time, working on behalf of conservation issues.

In answer to his question, it's true that we have met our targets that were given, \$30 million in operating, \$5 million in capital. As he's well aware, there are a number of issues at play here. To make the ministry meet its objectives, we had to prioritize what we were doing, make sure that we focused in on the core of our business, and I'm proud to say that in the next couple of weeks we'll be unrolling to the public and to this chamber the specifics of those reductions.

Mr Len Wood: The Ontario Forest Research Institute in Sault Ste Marie has developed a number of products that can be sold to other forestry jurisdictions, and sales from this source could be used to have extra revenue for the Ministry of Natural Resources. Would it not make a lot more sense to develop this and market this than to continue to further reduce jobs and put communities in northern Ontario at risk?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'll take that under consideration. I'm aware of the importance of that to the ministry and to northern Ontario. Everything's under review right now and we'll be getting back to you in the next couple of weeks. Thank you very much for the question. I appreciate it.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Mr Speaker, first I'd like to congratulate you also on your election to being Speaker, and thank you for last night. I appreciate that.

My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In the last session, we had a disastrous bill called Bill 163 brought in by the former government. I want to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs, will he be bringing in amendments to that bill this session? Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I can inform the member, yes, we will be bringing in amendments. In fact, we're going to take a surgeon's knife to Bill 163 and try and bring back some reality to that act.

Mr Murdoch: Will some of these amendments be giving back to our municipalities the local control which that government took away from us? I want to be sure of that, that our local municipalities will get back the control they used to have before the NDP took it away from them.

Hon Mr Leach: Yes, I can advise the member not only that we will be giving the municipalities back the autonomy they had, but that we will be increasing the autonomy that the municipalities in this province have.

AMALGAMATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Minister, your plan to amalgamate school boards throughout the northwest without a consultation process is not flying. You yourself will know that the Conservative Minister of Education from 1972 to 1978, the Honourable Thomas Wells, recently undertook an amalgamation study for the Windsor-Essex area and found that there were no cost savings. I refer the minister to Mr Wells's fact-finding report of August 1993.

Minister, let me tell you what I'm hearing in the north. Amalgamation will jeopardize education programs and courses that are distinct and unique to specific areas. Amalgamation will create unmanageable travel distances for staff and parents, and will strain the commitment of trustees by creating unmanageable geographic areas for trustees to represent. Amalgamation will create perceived job placement inequities within boards.

Minister, please explain to the northerners what you have done to take their concerns, such as these, into consideration.

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): In answer to the honourable member's question, as the honourable member may know, the school board amalgamation or reduction task force that has been at work for some time since it was put together by the previous government has recently released an interim report. Its final report is due in December, and the public is invited to make submissions to that task force, either written submissions or oral submissions, which they have done in some number.

Mr Miclash: Minister, I've outlined a number of northern concerns, and obviously, judging by your answer, you haven't even heard of these concerns before.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. I can't hear the question.

Mr Miclash: The fact is, Minister, we have had no public consultation on this issue, and the consultation process that was planned has since been cut by your government. What you replaced it with is yet another 1-800 number. I don't believe it.

Minister, northerners need proof that this is a move which will put money into the classroom by cutting administrative costs. Marion Helash, the chair of the Kenora Board of Education, in a recent letter to you, states: "The prime consideration for any school board should be the quality of education that is offered to its students. Nowhere in the report of the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force has it been proven that by amalgamating boards students will receive a higher-quality education than is already being provided."

The Wells report, again, clearly stated that amalgamation will not save money or improve the quality of education. Minister, I challenge you to show the people of the northwest studies that actually prove school board amalgamation to be an improvement to education. Where's your proof?

Hon Mr Snobelen: The honourable member should know that we have had a great deal of public input since the interim report was released. I'm told that 80% of the response that we've had from the people of Ontario has been from the people, the taxpayers and parents who are concerned about school boards here in the province, and not from the interest groups that have taken over those public hearings sometimes in the past.

I'm pleased that the public is responding and I'm sure that Mr Sweeney's report will include interests of the north

1510

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister without Portfolio responsible for WCB reform. Just last week the minister was assigned a new job by his supervisor, the Minister of Labour. In a news release, she said the minister had been asked to recommend an implementation plan for a 5% reduction in employer assessments, as promised in the Common Sense Revolution.

Now the original plan was for the Minister of Labour to ask the board to do it and then she would take the credit, but the board balked at this because it does take very seriously its legislated responsibilities under the act and it was in a jam. So they threw the thing over to the Minister without Portfolio responsible for WCB reform and asked him to come up with an implementation plan.

My question to the minister is, will you commit today that you will not cut the benefits of the working women and men who are disabled in the workplace in Ontario to pay for your give-back?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio, with responsibility for Workers' Compensation Board): I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question. I don't want to participate in any speculation about what happened with the board's decision; I merely want to share with the member and the members of this House what is actually happening.

It's quite clear that the Common Sense Revolution and this government have indicated to employers that we are very concerned about getting premium costs reduced and we're also very concerned about ensuring that the reforms in the workers' compensation area are done responsibly and they're done correctly and they're done to tackle the large unfunded liability of some \$11.4 billion.

I want to assure the member opposite that these reforms will be undertaken with full consultation and we have been working closely with the existing board of the Workers' Compensation Board. I think the member will be pleased that we're taking an approach which is sensitive to workers' needs as well as those of employers in the province of Ontario.

But it would be irresponsible to simply isolate a reduction without looking also at a reduction of costs associated with the administration of the Workers' Compensation Board. This government is committed to proceeding in that fashion, sensitively but also quickly, with full consultation.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Mr Speaker, I have a point of privilege: It seems to me that in this Legislature everyone should be treated equally whether they're in cabinet or out of cabinet. I'd like to know if you would look into the whole issue of the member for Burlington South, who's in cabinet, being the only member of cabinet who did not receive applause when he answered his first question.

HEALTH BUDGET

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): A serious point of privilege, Mr Speaker: The Minister of Community and Social Services indicated that he was prepared to make available to the leader of the third party a proposed budget. I'd like to ask that he table that, so all of us may have equal access to the information and advice that he's providing.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The minister will take notice of that.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): In the east gallery there's the Honourable John Stopp, immediate past president of the Legislative Council of the state of Tasmania, and his wife, Mrs Ardi Stopp. Welcome.

ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Some days ago, I think it's six days ago, I raised with you my concern about the circumstances surrounding the governor's speech last Wednesday. You indicated at that time quite helpfully that you were going to inquire into the circumstances of opening day and report back. I'm very interested to know how you're coming in that matter, since I view it as one of some urgency.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I have asked for that report and I anticipate I will have it this week. I hope to be able to report this week.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I just would like all honourable members to join with me in wishing a happy birthday to the dean of the Legislature, my friend from Nickel Belt.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICERS

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move that Bert Johnson, member for the electoral district of Perth,

be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the whole House; that Gilles Morin, member for the electoral district of Carleton East, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the whole House; and that Marilyn Churley, member for the electoral district of Riverdale, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the whole House.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would the member like to speak to that?

Hon Mr Eves: I just have a few brief comments. I would like it to be known that although I guess it is the privilege, if you will, of each party to nominate presiding officers after the office of Speaker is filled by election, we are proposing and have proposed to the other two House leaders that the office of Deputy Speaker be rotated on an annual basis among the three parties so that everybody can gain the experience and the insight into serving as the Deputy Speaker of the House. That is our intent.

In past parliaments the practice here in the province of Ontario has generally been that when there is a majority government the Deputy Speaker also came from the government party; when there's been a minority government the Deputy Speaker traditionally has come from one of the opposition parties. However, in 1990, on the first occasion on which we elected the position of Speaker in this Legislature, the Deputy Speaker was the only other candidate who happened to run for Speaker in that election and he became the Deputy Speaker.

We think that it would be a good practice for the province of Ontario and for the Legislative Assembly to rotate the position of Deputy Speaker on an annual basis so that all presiding officers gain some insight into that very responsible position.

The Speaker: Further debate on that?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I would like to congratulate each of the people who have been named in the motion today and indicate that our preference in the opposition would have been to follow what had happened last time, and that was, since we have elected a Speaker in the Legislative Assembly, that the Deputy Speaker be a person who had run for the position of Speaker. It would have been understandable had the member for Mississauga South been appointed, since she had run. I guess she had run second, because there was a second ballot with her name on it and yourself.

It is our belief, I'll put on record, that while the government House leader has found an innovative way of dealing with this matter, and I commend him for his innovation, it would have been our preference that the member for Carleton East, who ran for the office, would have been the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly throughout this session.

What we have now in effect is a government-appointed Speaker. You're neutral, naturally, now that you're in that chair. A man from the government bench is a Deputy Speaker for the first term and presumably for the last part of the term—the first year and the last year if it were a five-year term—I presume it's going to be a four-year term in this case because we've had a three-year term and

a five-year term, so we're due for a four-year term.

The member for Carleton East has distinguished himself, has served in this capacity before. It would have been our anticipation that the best way to deal with this, in keeping with a harmonious House and what would seem to have been a tradition being established, once we went to the election of a Speaker, as we did last time, it would have been our preference for that to happen.

As I say, I make no personal references. I commend each of the people who have been appointed to these positions or who are named in this motion today. I simply wanted to indicate what I felt our understanding was.

I recall that when I was reading messages from various people who were contemplating running for the office, there was one particularly germane point in one of the letters that came out that suggested it would be—I forget the exact terminology—almost a certainty that the Deputy Speaker would be from the official opposition.

Now, I recognize that those running for the office do not have that opportunity to make that final decision. Nevertheless, I do believe there was that kind of understanding.

So I wanted to indicate that. I don't want to rain on the parade today by any means or to prolong debate all afternoon or anything of that nature, but I did want to indicate what our view is in this matter.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Very briefly, I also want to congratulate the individuals who have been appointed today and I want to indicate that we will be supporting the motion.

I think a couple of the points that have been raised by the House leader for the official opposition are fair points to make, although I do think the compromise that the government House leader has offered today will assure that there's not only representation as provided in the standing orders for the opposition parties but also rotation of the Deputy Speaker.

However, it's an area that perhaps the House leaders should actually look at, that section of the rules, and if in fact there's an agreement at some point that the Deputy Speaker should always be from the opposition, we should so state in the rules in order to guarantee some consistency.

I don't think there's anything that the government House leader has said today that would prevent us from—I assume we're going to be changing the rules very soon anyway, back to the way they were before we changed them, so we might as well add this into the mix.

I also think those of us who have been around here for a few years will remember that there was a Speaker from the opposition, Jack Stokes, from our caucus, and he was much harder on our caucus than he was on the government or the Liberal Party, and some might observe that in the last Parliament the Speaker who was toughest on the government was the individual who came from the government caucus and that Mr Morin was much fairer to the government in the last Parliament than was our own representative from our caucus. So I don't think there's any particular advantage in having people from

any particular caucus.

I think there's fair representation, the compromise is fair, and that the rule itself is perhaps something that the House leaders should talk about. So we will be supporting the motion.

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): If I could just add one other comment, I have no problem with the proposition put forward by the government House leader, but I do have a problem just from a practical point of view.

It would seem to me that if you're going to be rotating, surely you would have in your first rotation someone who has at least been in this House and has seen how the House operates, so that the second or third person, who has never been in the House, could at least observe the protocol, observe the process, so that in fact we could have a smooth operation of what is happening in this Legislature. It would just seem to me to be a practical solution to the problems.

What we have now—and I have no problem with the individual; I don't even know the individual, I'm just talking about the concept—is that we are in a situation where someone who has never been in this House is going to be the Deputy Speaker and will be asked to preside over a proceeding that he has never, ever participated in before. I just think from a practical point of view it would have made more sense to change the rotation so those people who have not had the experience could at least gain some experience by observing what happens in this House.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I just want to make a quick point. Although the appointments—and I want to congratulate those who have gotten those positions, but I just want to understand the statement by the House leader for the government. He said that it is a learning process every year that someone gets an opportunity to learn the process itself, and then he turned around and appointed Gilles Morin, who has been the Deputy Speaker, to learn the process when he comes around, because I presume that's what will be done.

I'm a bit confused that at one stage we had three people running for the position, and quickly the Premier appointed one of the members to chair of caucus so it took that one out of the race itself, and then turned around and gave the other position to the other party who was running, and then explaining to us that it is a rotation in all this to learn.

I just wondered what was the rationale in doing that, but in the meantime want to congratulate those who have gotten the jobs—it is an extremely responsible role—and hope that fairness will reign in this Parliament from thereafter, and not manipulating or, as we say, be a creative way in interpreting the laws of fairness around here.

The Speaker: You've all heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye." All those opposed, say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

PETITIONS

MOOSE TAGS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the hunters of northern Ontario care for and feed—as well as prepare trails for—and generally are charged with the responsibility for the overall wellbeing of the moose population during the off-season; and

"Whereas the hunters of northern Ontario are not recognized for this year-long effort;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass amending legislation to allow for a percentage of yearly moose tags to be allocated solely for those hunters residing in northern Ontario."

I have affixed my signature to it.

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition signed by a large number of people in the Niagara Peninsula, and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, demand that Karla Homolka's plea bargain be revoked by the Attorney General of Ontario, the Honourable Charles Harnick."

COMMON SENSE REVOLUTION

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a petition which is addressed to the Premier, and it's signed by 48 members of the Rockview Seniors Co-op and the Steelworker retirees chapter in Sudbury. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, seniors, families, supporting groups and people of Ontario are now petitioning you and all members of the Ontario government to stop the Common Sense Revolution, which deprives the elderly and favours the greedy, non-caring rich.

"We list some of our problems:

"Health care comes first, and hospital closures, plus cuts in services, affect seniors seriously.

"Co-op and non-profit housing should be increased and subsidized to provide for the growing number of seniors, instead of cutbacks which please greedy landlords.

"Pensions should be properly indexed to the true cost of living, with no cutbacks.

"Welfare payments should be adjusted to the needs of many unfortunate seniors. Cuts are not the answer to this serious problem.

"Finally, unemployment ranks high among seniors, disgusted at the unnecessary layoffs of their sons, daughters and grandchildren.

"Please stop your Common Sense Revolution, as it affects our Canadian seniors so adversely while favouring the rich."

I have affixed my signature to it and I agree with the petitioners.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I have a petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario which states as follows and is signed by about 150 people:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the Parliament of Ontario to take some action to ensure that the wage subsidy grants for Ontario early childhood educators remain in place and not be cut in any way." Of course, it's happened since then.

"This wage subsidy was put in place by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to address what they recognized as an inappropriate wage structure for these individuals, given the importance and necessity of their role. Early childhood educators provide an essential service and ensure that the needs of both young children and the working parent are met in a professional and highly efficient manner.

"This wage subsidy cut would make a tremendous statement by the government to the people of Ontario." 1530

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Further petitions? The member for Elgin.

VEHICLE SAFETY

Mr Peter North (Elgin): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and congratulations to you and all the other members of the House.

My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: "We, the undersigned, beg leave to petition the Parlia-

"We, the undersigned, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Reflect your children's future. This is a wake-up call. Transportation trailers can be made safer. We need reflective tape on all transport truck trailers. Make it mandatory; make it law.

"We, the people of Ontario, can make a change. Support the introduction of a bill. Please sign this below."

This petition has been delivered here to the Legislative Assembly and I'll affix my signature to it as well.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SHORTLINE RAILWAYS ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995

SUR LES CHEMINS DE FER D'INTÉRÊT LOCAL

Mr Palladini moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 5, An Act respecting Shortline Railways / Projet de loi 5, Loi concernant les chemins de fer d'intérêt local.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): The purpose of this bill is to provide for the regulation and licensing of shortline railways. The minister may appoint a registrar to issue licences for shortline railways. The minister may enter into agreements with the federal government to provide for the regulation and inspection of shortline railways by the federal government in the same manner as it regulates railways under federal jurisdiction.

CORPORATIONS INFORMATION AMENDMENT ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RENSEIGNEMENTS EXIGÉS DES PERSONNES MORALES

Mr Sterling moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 6, An Act to amend the Corporations Information Act / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements exigés des personnes morales.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): It is my pleasure to introduce for first reading this bill. As I indicated earlier, changes in this bill will result in the elimination of the \$50 corporate annual filing fee and allow my ministry and the Ministry of Finance to integrate the data collection processes for Ontario's corporate public record with the corporate tax program.

Further, while we are knocking away this filing fee, the taxpayer will win as well, because we will reap considerable savings within the ministry with the elimination of the need for this duplication of collecting this information within my ministry walls.

This constitutes a win-win solution for this province's business community and the taxpayer, and it is another step towards one-stop government service delivery for our business community.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I would like to call the first order, but I would like to indicate that it has been agreed, and I would seek unanimous consent, that after the leader of the third party concludes his remarks today, we will be starting into the normal rotation on the throne speech debate.

The three House leaders have agreed that the remaining time today and the time every day that the throne speech is debated hereafter, will be divided evenly among the three parties. There will be no Qs and As after each member participates in the debate.

On the day that the member for Elgin, who is an independent member, chooses to speak for up to 10 minutes, that time will be deducted from the total time of the day.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Do we have unanimous consent to that? Agreed.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): Mr Speaker, this is the first opportunity I've had to congratulate you, sir, on your election, and I want to wish you and all the other officers of the House the very best and of course assure you that I will obey your every command as a dutiful servant of the House.

I want to start by saying that this is of course the first speech I have had the opportunity to give in the House since the election. I want to begin by welcoming a number of new members, some of whom I see sitting in front of me; they were elected as part of the change in government which took place on June 8. I simply want to indicate to them that we will have very real differences of opinion, and I think you'll find that today. Many of

you I've had the chance to meet in my political life over the last 15 years; some of you I have not. In fact, some of the members have served with me in the House of Commons indeed, which I think points to the period of time we've been together.

I would just say this to the honourable members. There are very profound disagreements that are going to be expressed in the House and in the province over the next several months and indeed during the life of this government. I think those disagreements need to be understood. One of the great difficulties that a number of us have with what the government is doing is the fact that it's being done in response to a theory and it's being done in response to a text which doesn't permit of dissent or difference of opinion and which doesn't seem to permit of change according to circumstance. I must tell you that from my political experience, that is a very serious mistake.

You've all been elected on the basis of having made promises and you've all been elected on the basis of this document called the Common Sense Revolution, but I must tell you that quite apart from whether I'm a New Democrat or a member of a different party, I would say to the members opposite and I would say to the House and indeed to the public that I do not like fundamentalism in politics. I do not like the assertion that there is a text from which everyone must read and that that text must be applied regardless of circumstance and regardless of the real world.

I would simply say to members of the Conservative Party opposite, go back and read your Burke and remind yourselves of the fundamental truth in politics: that you do not destroy political institutions and you do not destroy ways of life because of a theory, and that if you fail to take circumstances into account you are making a very profound mistake. It is a mistake for which you will pay. I don't know when you will pay, I don't know the circumstances in which you will pay, but you will pay for it. You will pay for it because you cannot run a government out of a book, you cannot run a province of 11 million people on the basis of a theory, and you cannot ignore the circumstances of the people of this province.

Think for a moment of the conundrum of the problem which you have created for yourselves. The Premier has said if anything is not done that is in this document, or if anything is done that runs directly contrary to a promise in this document, he will resign. Well, I don't believe for a moment that he's going to resign; I don't think for a moment that the Premier is going to do that.

But the Premier has put himself in a box which is the wrong box for the first minister of this province to put himself in. What it means is that he's saying he has to do everything that's set out in this document even if it doesn't make any sense, even if on the basis of experience, on the basis of learning, on the basis of discussion, on the basis of dialogue, on the basis of give and take, he discovers that something in this document doesn't really make very much sense any more.

I know that my political career has gone through its ups and its downs, and I know that its greatest moments

are yet to come. But I also know that there have been critics of mine, and indeed some members opposite who are with us in the House—my good friend from Mississauga who's here, my good friend from Lanark county who's here, people who have known me for a long time; my very good friend from Etobicoke West, who's not here, unfortunately—

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): Right here, Bob.

Mr Rae: Oh, there he is. He's moved. He's got to get into that cabinet seat somehow and now he's moved over there.

They made a career—indeed, my colleagues in the Liberal Party with whom I've had a long relationship, with many of whom I've served in the House for 15 years; the member from Renfrew has probably been one of my harshest critics. One of the things they used to say about me was that I changed my mind, that I didn't keep a promise or that I did something differently from what I said I would do—Sunday shopping, for example, a very good example.

I'll tell you, sometimes you come up against the world of circumstance. Opinions change. The world changes. You discover that things are not as easy as they might have appeared in opposition. You discover that a promise made in the course of an election campaign sometimes doesn't make sense.

So where I part company with members opposite is partly in ideology, partly in political values, but above all where I part company with members opposite is in temperament. I am not a fundamentalist. I do not believe in textual truths being literally applied in the world of politics. That way lies a lot of danger, a lot of difficulty and, unfortunately and sadly, a lot of harm for real people. This is where I part company, and it's quite fundamental.

I would say to my friends, people in my own party know that I parted company with some of them over the years because of this difference in temperament, my attitude about circumstances and what sound political management requires. Sound political management sometimes requires that one says: "That ideology is interesting. It's got a lot of emotion behind it. It's got a lot of strength behind it. It just so happens that in this circumstance it isn't going to work."

So I want to say first of all to the Premier—who's now here, and I appreciate his being here—I will say very directly to him that there are times and places where we are going to agree. He may be surprised to hear me say that, but in a document that has as many specific promises as this one, it would be hard for me to say there's not a single thing in here that I agree with. As we will come to see, in fact, there are a number of areas in which I suspect there's very substantial consensus in the House about what needs to be done, not only among the three political leaders but among all members of the House, a very substantial consensus about this province and about what needs to be done in the province.

But I part company on this question of the fundamentalism that is at work here, on a temperament which says:

"There is the CSR"—as it's called now; it's got its colloquialisms—"and the CSR is everything. It is the Bible. It is the text. It cannot be departed from."

You had little red books in China. It's the same thing, exactly the same thing. It's the same inane repetition, the same inane reference to page and to text, the same inane reference to resolutions. Sensible people opposed it in China; sensible people will oppose it in Ontario. We don't need a revolution in this province. This is the last thing this province needs. People get hurt in revolutions. People pay a price for revolutions. For my part, I want no part of a revolution whether it comes from the left or whether it comes from the right, and I stand by those words.

The premise of the revolution, as it's been presented to us—and we even had to go through the ritual of having the Lieutenant Governor reduced to the point of reading out a 1-800 number and then people being told at the end of the speech from the throne that everyone on the government side rededicates himself to the Common Sense Revolution, almost like a kind of fundamentalist prayer meeting in which people are being asked to come forward and bring witness and bring faith to this process.

Well, I will say to the honourable members, I don't go to a lot of prayer meetings. I went to one when I was Premier, for the simple reason that I wanted to convince people—

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Yes, because I asked you to.

Mr Rae: Because you asked me to and because I wanted to convince people that I was tired of hearing from people who said the Premier didn't have a prayer. That's why I went.

Expressions of faith are those which we make individually, and we all reconcile ourselves to matters of faith. But I will say to you, Mr Speaker, and say to the government that this question of how this fundamentalism is expressed is going to get these guys into trouble. It already is, we can already see it now, because the government says, "We're not going to cut health care," and they're cutting health care.

Interjections: No, we're not.

Mr Rae: You are. They say, "No, we're not." Well, you are. I'm sorry, the facts will not bear you out. The facts will bear out the view that says that in many instances and in many places services are being reduced.

The government said, "No, there are not going to be any user fees," and then all of a sudden the Premier said: "No, when I was talking about user fees I was talking specifically about the Canada Health Act. I wasn't talking about the drug benefit plan. I was only referring to user fees under the Canada Health Act." The trouble with that is that there are no user fees permitted under the Canada Health Act, so how could he possibly have been talking about a Canada Health Act user fee when that's not permissible under the law? He must have been talking about some other user fees where they're permitted, like under the drug benefit plan.

I will say to members opposite that the approach they've taken and the number of promises that have been

made and the way in which these promises are being now interpreted and reinterpreted in the name of the Common Sense Revolution is something I find disturbing. I also from time to time find it amusing, but more than anything else I find it disturbing because—I will repeat the point for emphasis—in a revolution real people get hurt. That's exactly what the government opposite is doing: hurting real people in the name of an ideology. I find that offensive and I also find it even more offensive because it's so unnecessary.

Like all revolutionary documents, it has to be based on a series of myths. You have in every revolutionary movement the need to demonize the opposition, to demonize the outer world, and to create a series of myths that are built up in common. You look at any revolutionary movement around the world, this is how it operates.

So you have the myth of 10 lost years, you have the myth of an Ontario that was on its knees, on its back, struggling, unable to move, only to be saved by the imposition of this revolution. You have the myth of the several statements that have been made over the years: the myth that Ontario has the highest taxes of any jurisdiction in the western world, which I've heard the Premier say on other occasions; the myth that all was terrible and bad in the past 10 years, that there wasn't a single good thing that took place in the past 10 years, that there's nothing to be pointed to that was right; that only with the restoration of a Conservative regime after 10 years of these bogus outsiders being in power could any true prosperity be brought to the province of Ontario.

Applause.

Mr Rae: You see, they believe it, they really believe it. To me it's classic. Somebody's got to arouse you guys with eloquence. I mean, it's got to be done somehow.

I would say that these myths—and obviously these people are true believers, and I congratulate them for the simplicity of their faith.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): They're followers.

Mr Rae: They're followers, and we'll come to the followership in a moment, because I've seen caucuses at work, both large and small, and the larger ones are not necessarily any easier than the smaller ones.

I would say that what we have is the case of true believers who have created a series of myths which they've tried to impose on the province and which provides the emotional fuel for the Common Sense Revolution.

1550

I would simply say, very briefly, and I do not intend to dwell on this at all, but I would hope that the government and the Premier would, if only in their own private moments, reflect on some very basic facts about the province.

This province is a great and wonderful place to live in. It is a province that has benefited tremendously from the strength of its natural resources. It has benefited most emphatically and most importantly from the range of people who've made it their home; the fact that it is home to people from all over the world, and that this

province truly does represent the best hope for a great many people who have come here; that many good things have been done by Conservative governments, many good things have been done by Liberal governments, and many good things have been done by New Democratic governments. If the members opposite are not generous or wise enough, even in their private moments, to say such a thing, then I have no choice but to say it on behalf of my colleagues in my party and to say it on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal Party.

William Davis was a fine Premier. He served the province well. I happen to believe that when he left public office in 1984 and was replaced by Mr Miller, the people of the province made a decision in 1985 that they too wanted a change, that they were not satisfied with the status quo in 1985, and after 42 years of Tory government a minority Parliament was elected.

I am proud of many things that I've done in public life, but one of the things of which I am proudest is the fact that Mr Peterson and I decided that we would do things differently in order to create a new government. That was a wise choice; it was a sensible choice; it was a change that was necessary and healthy for the people of Ontario. It produced very good progressive government for two years between 1985 and 1987, legislation which has made a permanent difference in the lives of millions of people, people who are better paid, people who are equally paid, people are better housed and people who are more fairly treated as a result of the accord that we signed in 1985 and as a result of the change in government which took place in that time.

Our overall—

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Why don't you ask the Liberals about that?

Mr Rae: Well, people say that the Liberals benefited very substantially from that accord. I didn't benefit politically from it. In fact, we went into an election in 1987 and, yes, we became the official opposition, but it was a House in which we both had very small caucuses, Conservatives and New Democrats, and I would even say that through the period between 1987 and 1990 the Liberal government did some good things. Some were things with which I disagreed, some were things with which I disagreed, some were things with which I took them to task, but I will not subscribe to this eerily odd and restricted view that the only good things that can ever be brought in are brought in by Conservatives and that the things that are brought in by Liberals and New Democrats are somehow unworthy, unspeakable, unmentionable.

You have this phenomenon, now created in mythical proportions and repeated over and over ad nauseam and again in the speech from the throne, that somehow these last 10 years have been years which have been bad for the province. They have not been bad for the province. What has been bad has been a recession. What has been bad has been a tough economic circumstance which we've all had to go through. You can take your demonology and live with it all you want, and you can throw darts at the picture of the Premier of the day between 1985 and 1995 and say that it's all his fault and all his fault and all his fault. But I'm not the Premier any more,

and so now you're all going to have to find someone else to blame for your problems, and you're going to have to find someone else and something else to demonize.

What troubles me now is you've chosen them, the targets. It's no longer Bob Rae or it's no longer the NDP government; it's the poor.

Mr Stockwell: Oh.

Mr Rae: No, no, no, it is; it's us and them. It's a world of us and them, the messages that you've created. You are dividing this province in a way it has not been divided in my lifetime. You are setting one group off against another in a way that has not been practised in this province in my memory. I do not recall a Minister of Community and Social Services standing up and answering questions and indicating that he is so out of touch saying, "We gave people three months' notice to go out and find a job." There are half a million people who are unemployed in this province. There is a 10% unemployment rate in this province. Do not insult those people by saying that each and every one of them is unemployed because it's their fault. That is an insult. That is an insult to them, it's an insult to their families, it's an insult to their situation. Show some respect. Show some respect for them and for their situation.

Surely we've learned something from the Great Depression. Surely we've learned that you cannot blame whole classes of people for the level and kind of economic change we've seen take place in our economy in the last 50 to 60 years.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Blame the politicians.

Mr Rae: No, don't blame politicians. That's another easy out.

Hon Mr Harris: Blame the parties.

Mr Rae: The Premier's heckling me, Mr Speaker. I don't mind it.

Hon Mr Harris: Ten years of overspending. Ten years of irresponsible government overspending.

Mr Rae: Don't blame the politicians, and don't simply try to find your easy answers.

Hon Mr Harris: It's not easy.

Mr Rae: Oh, yes. You're right, it isn't easy. You're right it isn't easy, but now—

Hon Mr Harris: It took you 10 years to screw up; wasn't easy.

Mr Rae: I would say to the Premier that if he wants to heckle, that's fine, but he's going to get as good as he gives, I can tell him that right now. I'm not troubled at all by the fact that he's doing so, but I would say what is objectionable about what is being done is this tendency, which is so strong now on the other side, so strong in the speeches that are being given, that somehow there's a series of easy solutions, easy, simple, quickly done, which will be brutal in their impact, harsh in their impact and which will produce a miraculous response.

Mr Murdoch: You need some common sense.

Mr Rae: It's not common sense; it's the opposite of common sense. It's ideology.

Mr Murdoch: You haven't read it.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Grey-Owen Sound is out of order.

Mr Rae: It's an ideology at work. It's a philosophy that's based on a series of illusions, on a series of half-truths and partial truths.

The Speaker: The member for Grey-Owen Sound is not in his own seat.

Mr Rae: Ontario is not the highest-taxed jurisdiction in the world. We have not had 10 lost years. We've had production and productivity that's been good and healthy. We've also had a very tough recession, a recession that hit this province hard, starting in 1989, and did not let up until 1992-93. Those are facts.

No one government is responsible for that recession. You can't blame it on Ottawa alone. You can't blame it on anything. You can only say that a series of forces combined to make life extremely difficult for the people of this province, and those forces combined to put many, many people in a very difficult circumstance.

I would say that, given those circumstances and given those difficulties, I am enormously proud of what this government of mine tried to do in response to that recession. At the same time, I fully recognize that the people of this province decided in 1995 that they wanted a change. They wanted a change because they were offered a series of solutions by the members of the Conservative Party that obviously 45% of the people said would be preferable to them.

I am not one of those people who believes that there is some kind of conspiratorial corporate agenda which is antithetical to the interests of people that has somehow been secretly imposed on the people of the province. I in fact believe very strongly that the people saw something in what this party opposite was offering that they in fact liked. We'll never know exactly what that was, what the combination of elements was; whether it was the attack on employment equity, whether it was the attack on welfare and welfare recipients, whether it was appeals to lower taxes, whatever it might have been; a combination of those things. I don't think we'll ever know.

I would just make one cautionary comment to the members opposite: Do not make the mistake of the small child who attends the hockey game and believes that because he sings the national anthem he thereby has caused the start of the hockey game.

Let me try and explain this analogy to the member from Owen Sound. Do not assume that everyone who voted for you has read the Common Sense Revolution or knows anything about it. Do not make the mistake of believing that this province consists of millions and millions of people who have taken this blue book, learned it by heart and who believe its rote. They don't. So don't assume that there is quite the support that you believe there is for all the elements of the revolution that you are about to impose on the people of the province.

There are some things that need to be done, and let me say the areas in which we agree in general. We learned in office that there is a need to restructure the bureau-

cracy, that there is a need to improve the quality of government services, that there is a need to restructure and change and be willing to recognize that, given the circumstances we've been through in the last five years, those changes will not be easy or automatic and require leadership.

I'm thinking of my colleague from Windsor-Riverside who, in my view, served brilliantly as the Minister of Education and Training in our government. He's someone who had the courage to take a royal commission report and indicate to the public that he was prepared to go for it and go for it quickly: a need to improve standards, a need to ensure better teacher training, a need to improve accountability, accountability of teachers, accountability of students.

One of the Conservatives opposite is shaking his head. I know he is; I can hear him. I would say to him that his government, it would appear, is about to implement many, if not all, of the recommendations of the royal commission which had the full support of this government, which had my personal support and the support of the Minister of Education and Training. We know now that the work that's under way by our friend from Kitchener—help me here—

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Sweeney.

Mr Rae: John Sweeney. Mr Sweeney's work on the reorganization of school boards, the work that's being done on how we make the difficult decisions that have to be made—I'm proud to say that's work we started.

In my own constituency this is causing problems in the sense that the city of York, which has a long history in the province as the second smallest municipality in Metropolitan Toronto—and there's a great deal of concern about amalgamation and the effect on smaller municipalities, and I understand these concerns. But, above all, we must remember that the essential point is service to the constituents and the interests of people in the service, not the interests of the bureaucracy, not the interests of the status quo, but making sure that citizens are well served. That's a fundamental point that we made in announcing our commitment to educational reform and it's a point which has my full support and I know has the full support of the former Minister of Education.

Restructuring health care: one of the most difficult things that this government is about to become engaged in, as we were engaged in it for several years. In the time of my administration, we closed over 8,000 hospital beds. At the same time, we increased the efficiency of the system quite substantially, we reduced the number of patient stays, we increased the number of patients being treated and we dramatically improved care for cancer patients. We worked and built on reforms that had been started by the Liberal Party with respect to health care for heart patients and we brought in the changes to long-term care, which I regret to say have been put aside—in favour of what, we don't exactly know, but something like it is going to have to happen; something like it is going to need to be done.

I want to say to the Premier, as opposed to perhaps some of the questions and comments which have been made by others, I understand full well the need to continue with the work of restructuring in the health care sector. He's come back from a Premiers' conference, ones which I had occasion to go to for five years. All our ministers of Health have been attending conferences of the ministries of Health across the country. There are changes under way in every province, in every jurisdiction. We know these changes must happen.

My colleague from Kingston, who's newly elected, will know Kingston has been one of the cities that's led the way in restructuring. My colleague from Windsor, newly elected, is also nodding and he will know that in Windsor we've seen substantial restructure. In Thunder Bay it's taking place; in Timmins it's taking place; in Guelph, in Sault Ste Marie we've seen the changes; and now, finally, they're coming to Metropolitan Toronto and for some people this is news. It's big news because suddenly a report comes out saying: "We must reduce the number of hospitals. We must run the affairs more efficiently."

I will just say this to the Premier: I believe—and my colleagues may not appreciate my saying this, but I'll say it anyway—the restructuring needs to happen. That's not the question. The question is how it happens and the question is how much money do you put in up front that allows the retraining and allows the change to take place without disruption and without damage to the health care of the citizens of the province.

The problem is, and I'll come to this in a moment, that your financial plan is driven by the tax cut and it's the tax cut that's driving all the other cuts that are taking place in services. So where we part company not just in temperament, which I've already described, but in policy, is that far too much of your policy is being driven by the tax cut and the tax cut is creating a fiscal and a financial straitjacket that is going to cause you tremendous problems in the services you are responsible for delivering.

Restructuring is difficult enough; this province doesn't need an additional financial straitjacket. We already have the one imposed on us by the recession and by demographics and by increased demand and increased need and by the technologies in the system which are very expensive; by the fact that we had to, as a government, make the very difficult decision early in our term, early in our mandate, that we were going to get tough on health care costs. My colleague from the Beaches was the Minister of Health at the time and she had one hell of a job getting the health expenditures down from 11% and 12% that all of us had helped to fuel.

I'm as responsible for this as anyone. In opposition, I was the first to get up and say, "We need more of this and more of this and more of this," in terms of health care. When we became government, we took an approach that said we need to ensure the quality of the system, but that in itself requires change, change which is going to be tough enough without the additional financial straitjacket which your tax cuts are imposing on the system. They're imposing it here; they're imposing it in education; they're imposing it in welfare. You are cutting deeper and harsher and harder and more quickly than you objectively need to. Why? Because of the tax cut. That's where we part company.

I don't part company on the need to make change. I part company on how the changes are being imposed, the pace and speed with which they're being imposed, the level of cuts which is being put into place and I'm saying the reason for this is because you have adopted a fiscal strategy and a financial strategy which is fuelled by your tax cut, which in turn is fuelled by your ideology.

Everyone would like to see a tax cut. My neighbours would like to see a tax cut. I would like to see a tax cut. Everyone would like to see one. We're all human beings; we'd like to have more in our pockets. But the tax cut is being sold on the basis of an illusion. The illusion from an economic standpoint is that, in and of itself, the tax cut will create thousands and thousands of jobs.

I believe that the individual who will go down in history as Dr Mark Mullins, PhD, economics, has told us that he believes that this will help to create more than 725,000 new jobs. I wish Dr Mullins well in his prediction, but I would say to members opposite and I would say to my colleagues in the House and to the public, a tax cut of this dimension would only create jobs if the deficit was allowed to rise to proportions which are unacceptable to everyone in this House.

If you look at the history of the Reagan tax cut upon which this is so much based, what did Reagan do? Reagan cut taxes; it's true. Reagan also increased spending very substantially, particularly in defence, where there was great expenditure and a great increase in jobs. He also allowed, in combination with the Congress, the deficit to rise exponentially. He tripled the size of the United States deficit. That was a tax cut which definitely fuelled growth in the economy, but only taken in the context of all the other things which were being done at the same time.

1610

This government will learn, as others have had to learn, that if you're taking all that other money out of the economy: your cuts in welfare, which take a lot of money out of the economy; your cuts in services, which take a lot of money out of the economy; your cuts in capital, which take a lot of money out of the economy; the thousands of jobs which have already been lost by virtue of the capital cuts—and there's more to come. We don't know what they are. We assume we'll hear about them in dribs and drabs as panicky mayors and people on the receiving end of letters tell us what the impact of all these things is, because we don't know what all the cuts are that have been announced by the government. What we do know is that those cuts are just the tip of the iceberg, because we know, from having been in government as recently as the end of last June, exactly what it's going to take in order to effect the kind of cuts which will give you some room to bring in the tax cuts which you've promised and keep the rating agencies happy.

Mr Pouliot: You can't do it.

Mr Rae: The only way you can do it—it can be done. Can it be done? Yes, it can be done. But the only way it can be done is by cutting services and by cutting expenditure far more than you really need to or in fact, I might say to my friends opposite, who may not believe me now, but I think they will in a while, more than you're really

going to want to, because you have to do what's in the Bible. If it's got to be done, it's in the book, even if it doesn't make any sense.

It's interesting that down in the United States, Senator Dole, say reports this week, is starting to have second thoughts about the tax cut in the United States. Why? Because it's going to have a negative effect on the deficit, it's going to have a negative effect on medicare. He doesn't want to get hit by all those things. But no, not this government. This government is fuelled with an ideology that is going to take it and drive it, and, unfortunately and tragically, it's going to drive the province in a way it does not have to go.

Mr Pouliot: Who benefits with a tax cut?

Mr Rae: A tax cut goes to those who already have. But we have to remember, when we look at the effect of the tax cut as a stimulus to the whole economy, you've got to offset that by all the money that's being taken out. Somebody who's on welfare spends the money that they have. If they have \$1,500 a month, they spend \$1,500 a month. If they have \$1,800 a month, they spend \$1,800 a month. What you are going to find is that the people who are really spending at the lower end of the scale are going to stop, because they don't have it; it's not there. It's been cut off at the source.

I know the ideology tells you that they'll all go out and find jobs and find work and that everything will be fine. But I'm just telling you, it ain't true. It isn't true, because there are not in every circumstance the jobs to be done and the jobs to make it possible.

So I say to members opposite and I say to my colleagues in the House, we have a government that is fuelled by an ideology, an ideology that divides the province, an ideology that puts one group of people up against another, that says that there are deserving people and there are undeserving people, and that people who are on social assistance are, of a class, undeserving. It says that they are somehow uniquely going to be suffering a 22% cut.

If the cut works for them, why wouldn't the government apply it to all of us? Why wouldn't the Premier apply it to himself, to his own salary, if it's such a good idea? Why wouldn't he apply it to mine? Surely logic would say that if it's bearable for somebody who's making \$10,000 a year, it should be bearable to somebody who's making \$80,000, \$90,000 or \$100,000 a year. It would be an incentive for all of us to work that much harder. I just would say, if it's sauce for the goose, it's sauce for the gander.

Now, we took a very different decision as the government. Through the social contract we imposed difficult choices and we reduced people's incomes working for the taxpayer, including, I would say to all of you staring at me, everyone in this House. We took a cut, but we didn't impose it on the people on social assistance, because they're the ones who are the least able to bear it.

Politically, was it popular? Obviously, what you're doing has aroused some degree, I must confess, because I'm over here and you're all over there, of popular support. But I wonder if this creation of a world of us

and them is really to our advantage. I don't think it's to our advantage as a civil community. I don't believe that. But equally important, I don't believe it's in our economic interest to do this.

What has helped to define the economic success of this province is its quality of life. What makes this province competitive is the fact that we have good services, is the fact that we have good training programs, is the fact that we don't have huge gaps between rich and poor, that we have not allowed our inner cities to become areas that are uninhabitable by people, where we have buildings that are boarded up. You go to any large American city—I remember when I first visited Detroit as Premier. I said, "I want to walk to the next meeting," and they said: "Premier, nobody walks that way. Nobody walks down that street. You can't do it. You've got to get into a car and go anywhere you want to go in this community."

Interjection: Al Palladini would like that.

Mr Rae: Well, the Minister of Transportation would be thrilled with that kind of a world. Everybody has to get into a car in order to survive. If you want to take a bus or you want to take public transit or you want to walk, well, that's not good for the philosophy over there, but it happens to be good for building civil communities.

The Premier's going to be hearing from many, many people, I believe, over the next while who will be concerned about the growing imbalance between rich and poor, the fact that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Yet the way in which we have defined ourselves as an economy is one which succeeds not by pitting one group against another and not by allowing one group to exploit itself at the expense of someone else, but by having a community that works because it's prepared to work together.

Putting worker against management: We had the lowest days lost to strikes in the history of Ontario during the last five years. We had industrial relations peace in the last five years which was unprecedented. We had greater productivity increases than we've ever had. We had the largest increases in capital investment in 1994, the largest increases in capital investment and spending in the manufacturing sector. All this baloney about how we were driving jobs away: How could it be true if we had the largest increase ever in the history of the province in terms of capital investment?

These are facts, which the theories opposite cannot change. The theories opposite are based—and you cannot move these folks. Many groups come and see me, the people come and they say, "What should we do?" I have all sorts of people come and say, "Is it worth talking to the backbenchers?" I say: "Well, it's always good to know who your member is, but forget it. He or she has got their little copy of the little blue book, and they're going to wave it in the air at you and they're going to say, 'I don't have any choice.'"

If you sit down and listen to someone and they persuade you of something, if someone comes into your office and says, "Will you admit for once that you are wrong?" you couldn't do it. You could not do it. Why couldn't you do it? Because it's not written in the text. It's not in the textbook. It's not there. You'd say,

"Because we agree with it." Well, that's fine, but then this simply confirms my view. This is a government that is operating in a bubble. It is a bubble that is permeated by the ether of this ideology and of this philosophy and of this political religion that is found in this little pamphlet.

Students who come by and say, "Wait a minute now, we can't afford these kinds of—" people who come in and say, "Well, why are you doing it this way? What's happening to me here?" they say: "Oh, it doesn't conform to the theory of the Common Sense Revolution. It's not on page 15, paragraph 2, of CSR."

If we had taken this approach with any piece of fundamentalist literature that might have been devised by members of my party, in their wisdom, to tie around the necks of the cabinet, can you imagine what members of the Conservative Party or the Liberal Party would have done?

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): We never had one.

Mr Rae: The Liberal Party of course would not know anything of this experience because they are not troubled by a philosophy, though I did find a copy, not that anyone can find one in their possession, all copies have been—I had to go to the legislative library to get a copy of this. But I say this only in jest.

And that is to say to members opposite that the financial plan is driven by the tax cuts. The tax cuts will make rich people richer and poor people poorer and will not, on a net basis, because of the other cuts that are under way, create additional work and additional jobs. All the tax cuts in the world will not build you a subway. You can cut taxes all you want and it will not improve the quality of public services. It will not build up the infrastructure in training and in people that has been the basis of real growth and real advance in this province. 1620

We can't compete on wages with Mexico. We don't want to compete in terms of the balance between rich and poor with the largest cities and communities in the United States. Where we want to and where we will compete is in the area of quality—quality of production, quality of life, this unique combination of society and economy which we've built up in this province over 100 years.

That's what I think this government is losing and that's where I believe this government has lost its way. I don't believe the government has reflected well enough and long enough on the impact that these so-called Common Sense Revolutions are going to have on the people of the province.

I agree with Edmund Burke, who said that he did not think it was wise or fair to destroy institutions of government because of the existence of a theory. I agree with Edmund Burke and I disagree with these ersatz imitators of the Conservative religion who are sitting opposite.

Finalement, je veux dire quelques paroles à nos concitoyens dans la province du Québec qui sont en train de faire une décision importante en ce qui concerne l'avenir du Canada. Comme premier ministre de la province, j'ai eu l'opportunité plusieurs fois de parler à

mes concitoyens canadiens dans la province du Québec au sujet de notre avenir commun que nous partageons ensemble. Encore une fois, les Québécois sont en train de faire une décision, et c'est important pour nous, je crois, de leur dire directement que c'est une volonté, c'est un espoir, c'est un sentiment qui est très profond dans notre province, la province voisine du Québec, que le Québec reste avec nous, partenaire permanent dans un Canada qui reste fédéral et uni.

J'ai eu l'occasion de voir, il y a quelques jours, le discours du premier ministre du Québec, M. Parizeau. Il a fait, je crois, une chose extraordinaire. Il a cité l'exemple d'une déclaration de la part de notre premier ministre, M. Harris, comme étant une sorte d'excuse pour la position de son gouvernement. Je veux dire à M. Parizeau que vous verrez à beaucoup d'occasions que moi je ne suis pas d'accord avec le premier ministre de notre province. Mais en ce qui concerne le Canada, nous sommes tout à fait d'accord.

M. Harris a dit tout simplement que les Québécois ne doivent pas prendre les choses pour acquises s'ils votent Oui. Il a eu raison en disant cela. Il a eu raison en disant aussi que si le Québec décide que Oui, en effet le Québec décide de devenir un pays indépendant et étranger au Canada. Pour moi, c'était une déclaration très claire avec laquelle je suis tout à fait d'accord. Nous voulons que le Québec vote Non parce que le Non, c'est le vote pour le Canada et pour un avenir commun que nous allons partager comme partenaires.

Mais, en même temps nous voyons dans les sondages comment l'opinion publique en Ontario et dans le Canada anglais est claire : pas de monnaie à partager ; pas de passeport à partager si le Québec veut devenir un pays indépendant. Je crois que c'est très clair. Ce n'est pas dur

On m'a demandé hier soir à la télévision, est-ce que ça représente un durcissement de l'opinion au Canada anglais ? J'ai dit non. Au contraire, c'est seulement, je crois, une reconnaissance du bon sens des Canadiens que si les Québécois veulent être indépendants, eh bien, soit. Mais ça va causer des difficultés extraordinaires pour nous et pour les Québécois.

I have just said in French what I would say as well in English, and that is that when Mr Parizeau quoted Premier Harris, some comments the Premier made, as somehow justifying Quebec's voting for Yes, I wanted to say to Mr Parizeau very directly that while Mr Harris and I disagree on many subjects—and we've been sparring mates for nearly 15 years—I don't think there's a very big difference of opinion at all between us on the subject of the future of Canada. In fact, what the Premier has been saying with respect to the common interests that we have as Canadians, what the Premier has been saying about the realities of the choices that face the people of Quebec, are precisely the comments not only that I would have made, but that I have made as Premier for the last five years.

It is in everyone's interest, Quebeckers and those of us living outside Quebec, that a majority of Quebeckers see the common sense and the good value of a No. It is a simple fact of life, and the polls yesterday certainly confirmed it, that opinion in English Canada is very clear. If Quebec votes Yes and desires independence, there is no sentiment in the rest of the country for a common passport, there is no sentiment in the rest of the country for a common currency and there is no sentiment in the rest of the country for some other kind of partnership that would be based on some series of offers made by a separatist government in Quebec.

I speak as one who fought long and hard for Meech, I fought long and hard for Charlottetown, and I've got the bruises and scars to prove it. But I say to my friends in Quebec very directly, do not make the mistake of listening to those who would put forward propositions that are based not on their understanding of what really English Canada wants but on their own particular philosophy.

I believe that all the premiers who've ever served this province as Premier have wanted this country to stay united and have wanted to be strong partners with the people of Quebec. We still extend—we want to extend and we must extend—our hand of friendship and our hand of partnership to the people and government of Quebec, and we say directly to the people of Quebec, let us put this issue of separatism behind us, let us work together to build a great country, to make it even greater than it is today, and let us work together as Canadians for a common future. That's the partnership we believe in. That's the relationship we want. That's the country we love and we want to build together.

Mr Speaker, I've had the chance to serve this House in many different positions, as you will recall, sir, because I came when you also had been elected, and as the Premier will recall, since he was elected a year before. I've had the chance to serve this House as the leader of the third party, as the Leader of the Opposition and as the Premier. I preferred the last job, but unfortunately it was not the one that the people of Ontario decided to give to me.

I have accepted that decision in good grace, and I want to say to members opposite that I look forward to providing sound, constructive advice to the government. I wish that their ideology was more permeable and I wish that their revolution was less dense, but somehow nature does not always prescribe these things.

1630

I say as well to my colleague in the Liberal Party, who unfortunately is not here today—she told me she would not be able to be—that she was a very vigorous Leader of the Opposition. When I was Premier, she did me much damage and scored many direct hits and direct blows, and I'm sorry to hear the news that she is not going to be carrying on as leader of the official opposition through to the next election. But I would say to my colleagues in the Liberal Party that we look forward to working with you in opposition. We will have differences as well—we will perhaps remind you from time to time of some of the red book promises you made—a number of occasions on which we will share a common view and a number of occasions on which we will differ.

I would say to all members, and I hope I will be permitted this brief moment of sentiment, that I love this province. It's a great and wonderful place. I believe it's

strong enough to withstand the damage done to it by any government, and in particular, I wish it well in the circumstances ahead. I would plead with the government, please remember the least among us. Remember the most vulnerable and remember that we are not truly prosperous until the least among us has nothing to fear.

The Speaker: Mr Rae moves, seconded by Mr Cooke, that the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding the following:

"This House, however, regrets that the speech from the throne shows that this government has chosen to attack the vulnerable and abandon basic services that the people of Ontario depend on, and condemns the government for:

"Creating a fiscal crisis in Ontario by promising an irresponsible 30% tax cut for the wealthy, then implementing cuts of somewhere between \$6 billion to \$9 billion in basic services for people in order to pay for these tax breaks;

"Failing to put the basic human needs of the people of Ontario ahead of irresponsible tax giveaways;

"Failing to honour its commitment to protect the most vulnerable among us, and instead imposing massive cuts to social assistance that hurt children, seniors and those with disabilities;

"Abandoning the basic protections for working people by cutting health and safety employment standards and wage protection as well as freezing the minimum wage;

"Breaking its promise to protect health care by cutting \$132 million from the health care budget, including cost-saving initiatives such as birthing centres and the photo health card, and by threatening Ontario's seniors with user fees on the Ontario drug benefit plan;

"Giving up on the 500,000 men and women looking for work by slashing job training, including a special program to give 66,000 young people their first job and day care funding to let single parents find work, and offering no help or hope in place of these programs."

Further debate?

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): As the new member for the riding of Peterborough, I would like to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your recent election as Speaker. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate all members of this House on their election win. I look forward to meeting and working with all members of this House in the months ahead.

I would first like to spend a moment telling this House a little bit about myself and why I chose to run for provincial office. I am married, I have three children, I have six great grandchildren. I am the founder and owner of a local travel agency and tour operation which I started in 1974 after spending 14 years owning and operating several sales and service companies in the Peterborough riding.

I was elected councillor in the township of Otonabee in 1982 and became deputy reeve in 1985. In 1992, I was acclaimed as warden of Peterborough county, an office which I proudly held for three consecutive terms.

I've always been active in my community, serving on various boards, commissions and associations in many capacities, two of which I am proud of: Rotary International and the Peterborough Civic Hospital.

There are three fundamental principles which have shaped my life. They are my family, my community and the principle of hard work. Not only are these principles important to me but they are also held dearly by many of the people in my riding.

I would now like to make a few comments on why I chose to run for this legislative seat. Towards the end of my third term as county warden, a gentleman told me that if I wanted to seriously change the way the provincial government was working, I would have to run for higher office. I thought long and hard about what he told me and I concluded that he was right. Government was no longer working for the people.

We must chart a new course towards streamlining operations and improving inefficiencies without compromising services and safety. Overlapping services and government waste were stripping this province of competitive opportunity. Over the last 10 years people have been asking for many improvements in our society, but government has not responded.

People were asking for long-term jobs and tax relief; they didn't get it. People were asking for safer communities; they didn't get it. People were asking government for better health care; they didn't get it. People were asking why their kids were no longer excelling in school. Quite simply, people were asking for better government for less money, and they didn't get it.

But, ladies and gentlemen, our new government is committed to providing the people of this province with better government for less money. We have to devise strategies that will allow us to deliver the best service for the best possible price, a simple business concept that we must apply to the running of government. People have to be less dependent on government. I campaigned in my riding on that principle, our party campaigned on that principle, and I intend to do everything I can to make that principle a reality.

Our party has the political will and desire to change the way our government functions. The do-nothing approach puts at risk the very institutions we are trying to improve. I ask all legislators, do not be afraid of change, for it is the only thing that is going to stay the same. We must all prepare for the future, as the past is now closing in on us all. These principles are the backbone of the Common Sense Revolution.

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I am honoured to stand here today representing the people of Peterborough riding, a riding with much diversity, which adds to its splendour. At the centre of the riding is the city of Peterborough, home of Canadian General Electric; Fisher Gauge; Johnson and Johnson medical products, that has developed a new surgical stent for heart surgery, which will create 80 new jobs by this December; Milltronics, developing high-tech sonar equipment; Pebra, an auto parts manufacturer; and Quaker Oats of Canada, the home of your granola bars,

your morning cereal and indeed your Gatorade. All of these manufacturers have adapted to a changing economic climate and provided strong employment opportunities for our community.

Encompassing the city are five townships, a village and a first nations reserve. The rural component of my riding strongly contributes to the local and provincial economies by producing high-quality agricultural products. Tourism also plays an important role in the riding, as there are many resort operators and cottage owners. Vacationers from outside of Ontario and Canada flock to our area each year to enjoy its recreation and its hospitality.

My riding is also the home of Trent University and Sir Sandford Fleming College, schools that not only provide students with quality education but contribute immensely to our local economy by providing our area with nearly 1,500 jobs.

My constituents have put their trust in me to represent them, and I intend to do just that. Representing the people is something that many politicians seem to have forgotten. I intend to represent my constituents with honour and dignity. Anything less would be a sign of disrespect to them, disrespect to the office I was entrusted with and disrespect to the taxpayers of this province.

Which brings me to my final point. As members of this House, we must all remember to conduct ourselves with a high level of protocol, dignity and respect. People of this province are watching our conduct in this House with very keen interest. We all must remember that we have been sent here to work on behalf of the people of Ontario in a dignified manner. This chamber and the history that accompanies it deserves that courtesy, as do the people of this province. Again, Mr Speaker, I look forward to working with you.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): It is with a sense both of honour and deep concern that I rise today to respond to the speech from the throne. To begin, I want to thank the people of Windsor-Walkerville, the great riding I represent, for choosing me to be their member of provincial Parliament.

Windsor-Walkerville is a completely urban riding and it's the only riding which is entirely contained within the corporation of the city of Windsor. More than 20 languages are spoken in that riding by close to 73,000 people. The riding is principally composed of single, detached, owned homes, though close to 40% of my constituents are renters.

The people in my riding are employed in manufacturing, retail trade, health, social services, education and a variety of other occupations. The average household income and individual income in my riding is significantly below the provincial average.

Mr Speaker, you will be interested to know that in 36 parliaments to date, five Speakers have come from Essex county. One of those, the Reverend M.C. Davies, who served in the chair from 1949 to 1955, represented the riding which I now hold. Windsor-Walkerville has a rich political heritage. In addition to the Reverend Davies, the riding also elected a man who has served as inspiration to me, the Honourable David Croll. William Riggs was

elected there; Bernard Newman served for close to 30 years; Michael Ray; and my immediate predecessor, Wayne Lessard. Each of these individuals contributed in their own way to the health and vitality of Ontario.

One other note: My riding was the childhood home of our Minister of Finance, a man of great compassion and virtue who recognizes the importance of balancing budgets while at the same time not doing it on the backs of individuals and of the poor; a man whose vision and competence will help lead us into the 21st century. Paul Martin is truly a son of Windsor-Walkerville.

My riding is also the home of Ontario's Finance minister, who, though not possessed of the same virtue as his federal counterpart, none the less had the good sense to leave Windsor to pursue a career as a Conservative politician.

Indeed, I would be remiss if I did not point out that Windsor and Essex County rejected the Common Sense Revolution and said no to the shortsighted policies the government is pursuing in its speech from the throne. So I believe I am on solid ground when I say that the people I represent oppose this government and what it stands for.

The people of Windsor-Walkerville want very much to see Ontario's fiscal stability restored. They want a balanced budget and, no doubt, would enjoy tax relief. But the people I represent are good and compassionate. They recognize that it took us years to get into this mess, that the mess was contributed by all of us—as the former Premier said—and that it will take us many years to get out of it. We must do so carefully and thoughtfully so as not to unduly disrupt the economy.

While we all recognize the need for meaningful welfare reform, the people I represent know full well that you won't break the cycle of dependence by simply cutting rates. Welfare reform that benefits both recipients and ratepayers requires careful thought and implementation. None of us wants to penalize seniors, the disabled and children, yet this government persists in blindly pursuing its ideologically driven agenda.

We all want to put an end to welfare abuse. The city of Windsor and its department of social services has an enviable track record in fighting waste and abuse, a record that will not be improved on by this government and its 1-800 snitch line. Indeed, I come in contact with recipients every day who would give anything for a job. Many people on welfare want desperately to work. In spite of this fact and in spite of the fact that my city has benefited from an unprecedented boom in investment over the course of the last seven years—an investment, by the way, that totals more than \$5 billion—there still remain unacceptably high levels of unemployment.

The government has failed to address this issue in a meaningful way. Instead, they rely on the vagaries of Adam Smith's invisible hand and the trickle-down dribble espoused by the new right. Jobs and a commitment to full employment must remain the principal goal of our society, if not our government.

Health care is vitally important to the people I represent. Over the course of the past three years, my community has wrestled with the issue of hospital reconfig-

uration and maximizing the use of scarce health care dollars. Using the same envelope of money—to use the government's words—we have agreed to close two acute care hospitals in exchange for a \$22-million reinvestment in community based services and roughly \$60 million to \$63 million in provincial capital investment to give effect to the closure of the two hospitals through improved facilities at the remaining sites.

The new government, through its Minister of Health, has effectively put an end to our locally arrived-at solution. Despite its election promises, the government will likely cut overall health spending and not reinvest in the types of community based services that we've all come to recognize as the real alternative for the future.

I noted earlier that manufacturing is the leading occupation in my riding. Windsor-Walkerville is the home of Hiram Walker, the Ford Motor Co, General Motors, and a variety of smaller manufacturing interests. Chrysler Corp is on the boundary of my riding.

In my constituency, we place a great premium on collective bargaining and on recognizing the importance of harmonious labour relations. The government's approach to labour relations is cause for great concern in my constituency. The government appears to be deliberately provoking organized labour. It seems intent on creating labour instability in Ontario. This instability will contribute to a decline in productivity and profits as well as a climate which is unsuitable for new investment. The result: fewer jobs and declining tax revenues. This government is laying the groundwork for our first made-in-Ontario recession.

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We recognize that the government was given a broad mandate, but we also believe that the devil's in the details. Constructive dialogue on labour issues is in everyone's interest.

My riding will be the home of Ontario's first permanent casino. Windsor Casino Ltd, which currently employs more than 2,600 people, the vast majority of whom are from Essex county, is a proven winner.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the Premier for having acknowledged this and his decision to exempt Windsor from future referenda. We in my community understand the Premier's desire to ensure that future casinos have broad public acceptance and are grateful that he recognizes that this is already the case in Windsor.

All of us agree that the direction government must take is one which addresses the concern of the province's finances. There is not one of us who would not like to provide tax relief to the people who sent us here. The challenge is how you do it. On this score the government, in my view, has failed miserably. The throne speech is a recipe for recession. It's a prognostication of polarization which will divide this province and its inhabitants.

We on this side of the House, though our numbers are small, will stand up and be heard on the issues of the day. We will demonstrate that fiscal responsibility can be restored in a manner which is more equitable and fair than that which is envisioned by this government. The challenge before us is great, but, like our forbears, we

will meet that challenge. Indeed, we will exceed it. It is our obligation; it is our duty.

In conclusion, I cannot support the speech from the throne or anything that it stands for.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the member for Windsor-Riverside.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and congratulations to you and all of your colleagues who have been elected and chosen to preside over this place. I wish you a lot of luck, and if you think you're enjoying it today, I'd like to talk to you about it in about four years and see whether it's still a lot of fun being in that particular seat. It can get hot at times.

I wanted to spend the first couple of minutes thanking a few people who I had the pleasure of working with over the last four and a half years, when our party was in government, because I think all too often we forget some of the people who provide government with the kinds of services and leadership that they do and they don't get the kind of recognition that they require.

I had the privilege of serving for a period of time as government House leader. I would not recommend it to anyone, but none the less I had that opportunity and in that position worked very closely with the Clerk and all of the assistant clerks, and I want to say that we are privileged in this Legislature to have the quality of staff at our table and in our committees and the Clerk of this House to provide professional, expert advice and leadership in this place.

As government House leader, I worked very closely with them, and I want to tell them, on behalf of myself but my caucus and I'm sure on behalf of everyone here, how much we appreciate the professional service that they provide the Legislature and all the people of this province.

I also want to say that I had the privilege of serving in the ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and my deputy ministers in both of those ministries, David Hobbs and Glenn Thompson, in Management Board, Val Gibbons, and over in Education and Training, Charles Pascal, I found all of the deputies I dealt with and worked with to be professional civil servants, to provide the kind of leadership that was required and to implement the decisions that were decided upon by the government. I very much appreciate their leadership and all of the other civil servants I worked with in those particular ministries.

I want to just spend a couple of minutes talking about a couple of areas that I remain concerned about: the area of education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

I'm going to start with just making a couple of comments about the field of education, and I can't let pass some comments about the now-famous videotape of the now Minister of Education and Training.

I'm not going to go over all of the comments that have been made in the newspapers and other media outlets about the comment and the specific part of the tape that referred to a manufactured crisis in education. Those comments I think have been adequately dealt with and I hope will never be repeated.

I want to tell you that what struck me when I watched that tape a couple of weeks ago was something that troubles me much more than the content of what the Minister of Education and Training said. I encourage everyone in this place to look at that tape. What struck me was the incredible arrogance of an individual—and I think this reflects to some extent the ideology of this government—of a minister who had only been in place for six days who would have the gall to go before senior management of a ministry in a field that he has had nothing to do with in the past and pretend or assume that he has more knowledge than people who have led that ministry and been involved in the field of education for many, many years. I think it was a clear sign that there is absolutely no respect for the civil service by that particular minister and that there is no respect for the role of public servants and the public service in this province.

For me, that arrogance and that approach does not bode well for the political leadership that is now presiding over that particular ministry. I hope that I'm wrong. I hope that reforms will go forward. But again, that tape troubled me greatly and the arrogance that was demonstrated and lack of respect for dedicated, qualified public servants that the minister clearly indicated.

I also want to say that I have heard the minister and I have heard some of the rumours that are going around that there will be cuts in the general legislative grants to school boards of up to 20% and that this is all going to be targeted at the administration of our school boards.

Now, our government as well talked about the need to cut down on the bureaucracy in education and focus the resources on the classroom. Nobody disagrees with that objective. But a couple of things have to happen first. Number one, you have to define what the administrative costs are so that you can target those costs. You have to have them reported to the ministry so that they can be recorded so that it can actually target the reductions and expenditures the appropriate way. Finally, you have to be realistic about how much can be cut. A 20% reduction in the general legislative grants to school boards in this province will in no way leave classrooms untouched in this province. It's impossible.

First of all, for those of us who represent ridings outside of Metropolitan Toronto, we know that all of the general legislative grant cuts will affect all of the school boards outside of Ottawa and Metropolitan Toronto. Those two communities get very little in dollars from the province because of the commercial and industrial wealth that exists in those two communities.

When you talk about a 20% cut, this means that the rest of the province bears the entire financial cut, not Metropolitan Toronto and not Ottawa. That means that you're going to see huge cuts to the rest of the province. It also means that boards which are very poor and do not have much commercial and industrial assessment and which do not spend a lot of money outside of the classroom are going to be devastated. There will be massive cuts to classroom education in this province, and the quality of education will no doubt suffer.

In fact, there will be a crisis. It won't be a manufactured one, in the sense that it won't be dreamed up; it'll be a real crisis in education that will have been manufactured by the Chair of Management Board and the Treasurer on the public education system in this province. There will be school boards go bankrupt.

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We know that there are a number of school boards in the province that are running deficits already. The York Catholic school board almost went bankrupt a couple of years ago. The Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board is in deep financial shape. The Essex County separate school board also has a substantial deficit.

There are a number of school boards in this province that have deficits. Every year when we decided, in our cabinet, what the level of grants was going to be to school boards the next year, we had an impact statement that would show what the impact would be on certain school boards and how many school boards would go further in debt and whether there was a danger of any school boards going bankrupt. That work has to have been done by your government as well.

I ask all the backbenchers here who represent communities where their school boards are already in tight fiscal situations or in debt to ask the question of their Minister of Education and Training and the Treasurer: "What will the impact be on my school board? Will there be a bankruptcy? Will there be impacts on the classrooms? We want the documentation from the ministry." It is prepared for the cabinet. It should be shared with the backbenchers in the government caucus so that you know what you're going to have to defend back in your ridings.

The ministry and this government, I believe, are moving away from a reduction in the number of school boards. If you really want to target your cuts on administration and bureaucracy in the system, you have got to restructure education: There's got to be a reduction in the number of school boards and there has to be an amendment to the Education Act that will enforce cooperative services. One of the biggest problems we have is that school boards talk a good line about sharing services; when it comes down to it at the local level, it doesn't happen.

There was a question asked in the House today about we don't need to reduce the number of school boards because the Wells report in Windsor-Essex showed that it would cost more money. Read the report. The Ottawa-Carleton report and the Essex-Windsor report both said that more money could be saved through cooperative services, but if the cooperative services do not take place, then amalgamation is the only way to proceed to cut down on the amount of bureaucracy. That's where we're at.

In fact, there's been very little progress made in Ottawa-Carleton on cooperative services, and I know in my own community there has been no progress made. In fact, there are at least three or four agreements of shared services that school boards in the county have backed out of, so that we've actually taken steps backwards, not forwards, since the Wells report.

You've got to move forward on a reduction in the number of school boards. We could talk a bit about education finance reform and the fact that this province relies more on property taxes to fund public education than any other province in Canada and that it's got to come, we have got to reform the way we finance education. I think some of the mayors in the greater Toronto area have now come to that conclusion and are saying that part of the reform in the GTA would be facilitated by a reform in education finance.

I would argue that it doesn't need to happen in just Metropolitan Toronto; it needs to happen province-wide. That would be one of the most positive steps for business and for the public that any government can take, because one of the difficulties is that our property taxes are too high in this province. We need to fund services like education off the property taxes and on to the ability-to-pay taxes like income tax.

I just want to touch on a couple of other things. I'm very troubled to hear that this government appears to be backing off on commitments that our government made, and that they endorsed, on testing in our schools. As you will recall, there was a commitment made—it flowed partly out of the royal commission—that there would be province-wide testing in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11. Every student would participate in that testing, there would be reports to parents, reports to students and a province-wide report that would give the public a clear indication of how well the system is doing, where its strengths are and where its weaknesses are.

I am told, by people who know, that this government is going to do province-wide testing in grades 3 and 11 and it's going to do spot testing in grades 6 and 9. I myself, as an observer of this for a number of years, would find it very interesting that a Conservative government would actually be retreating from an NDP testing policy that was almost implemented under our tenure in government. I suspect that there will be a lot of Conservatives, if the government does this, who will find it very strange that a Conservative government is backing off on province-wide testing after the years and years of debate.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Do you think they've told the back bench that yet?

Mr Cooke: I don't think they've told the back bench. I think they should go to the ministry and ask to get briefed on what is going on. Why are we backing off on something that we thought we stood for for years?

I obviously hope the government will move forward with the college of teachers. There's a lot of arguments in favour of that particular proposal as well, and I think that legislation is almost ready. It should come into the House this fall. It would be nice to actually debate a piece of positive legislation, rather than the legislative agenda that we know is coming forward.

I also really look forward to the back bench of this government when they have to go home in a few months and deal with their school boards when their school boards start eliminating junior kindergarten. Ask the MPPs in Peel how they dealt with it when Peel tried to reverse the decision on junior kindergarten and how difficult it was. When the government makes it optional

for school boards to provide junior kindergarten and they pull the general legislative grants out and every school board in this province withdraws from junior kindergarten because there's no financial assistance from the province, then I'll tell you, all hell is going to break loose in your ridings and you're going to face the brunt of it.

I think now is the time for you to speak up, not after it's been done by those who are being driven, again, by ideology. Read the royal commission report. Read the evidence that's there of why there needs to be early intervention in our school system. Read why it saves us money in the long run and why other jurisdictions, with the exception of Canada and the United States, who do better than we do in testing across the world, have instituted early-years programs long before Canada has and that it really has provided real benefits.

I want to touch just for a couple of minutes on a couple of areas of Community and Social Services. I guess I do want to refocus on some of the comments that the minister has made in the last few days. We could talk about his comments that the children's aid society should intervene if families can't afford to feed their kids because of the cuts that are being implemented by this government. I can't remember a minister in recent years who has ever made those kinds of comments that the state should be so interventionist that it will take kids away from families. Look at the evidence. Look what happens to kids when they come into the care of the state. It is not a pretty sight. It damages those kids, it damages families and it costs the taxpayers a fortune.

The comments about tuna, the most ridiculous comments I heard today in the House, where the minister said, "Well, if you can't find tuna at 69 cents a tin, then maybe you can go and negotiate the price with the store owner"—I mean, what is this coming to, that a Minister of Community and Social Services would be that silly, out of touch, that he would make those kinds of comments in this place or anyplace else?

Four days to get a job—he told everybody last week, "Well, you've got four days to get a job; that's lots of time," and then that you can earn back all of your money. It doesn't seem to matter what the facts are, what's presented either in the newspaper or by the opposition parties, when we're getting briefed by the bureaucrats and the civil service in the Ministry of Community and Social Services, telling us that what the minister is saying is not accurate: You cannot earn back all the money. There are penalties in place, there are clawbacks that take place. That is the fact. Don't believe what this minister, of all ministers, is telling you in the House. It's not true. You're entitled to briefings. Go to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Get your own briefings before you get yourself in even more trouble.

I take a look at the comments that have been made by the Premier and others about: "Let's use workfare. Let's use trainingfare. Let's use educationfare." You cut the one major training program, you eliminated it—Jobs Ontario Training—that was specifically targeted at people on social assistance. Our colleges are bulging at the seams. Our universities are having difficulty coping with enrolment. Where are people supposed to get training?

It's not available in this province because you eliminated the one program, Jobs Ontario Training.

Then combine that with this housing policy being put forward by the new Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: that we've eliminated co-op and non-profit housing, we want to sell off some of the public housing, we're going to eliminate rent control, and somehow the private sector is going to move in? Get real about it.

Take a look at the studies that were done even by Tory governments. The private sector will not move in because if you build an apartment unit it costs about \$100,000 to build, the rent for the private sector to recoup that is over \$1,000 a month, and that means the private sector cannot build housing that will meet the market needs. They don't do it in any of the provinces where there is no rent control. They won't do it here. We're heading towards a major housing crisis in this province and it's because you're being driven by ideology rather than practical housing problems to help the people of this province.

Your government used to have practical housing policies when it built non-profit and co-op housing, when it brought in rent review. It wasn't an NDP government or a Liberal government that brought in rent review. It was a practical Conservative government.

We could talk about the CAS cuts, all the cuts that are taking place to agencies that serve the disabled when we were told that the disabled would not be hurt.

But I'm going to finish by saying just a couple of things about the Ontario Labour Relations Act, and this is going to be particularly targeted at my friends in the Liberal Party. We know where the Conservatives are coming from, and we know that very clearly. I totally disagree with their approach. I think the consequences for labour relations in this province in the short and long term are going to be disastrous. But I do get a chuckle when I now hear the Liberal Labour critic, the member for Windsor-Sandwich, talking about how terrible it is that there are going to be changes to the Labour Relations Act, when they voted against Bill 40 and when it was in this—

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): He wasn't here.

Mr Cooke: He wasn't here but he ran on the platform. The red book says, "Repeal the job-killing sections of the NDP labour law."

You know, this is typical Liberal policy, that the Liberals always want to have it both ways. They can never say what they stand for. They finally got caught for it. I mean, who could have gone into an election campaign at 55% in the polls and come out of it with fewer seats than when they went into the election? It's because they don't have the guts to say what they stand for, and this is a prime example. Now they're back in opposition, now they want to court labour, so now they say, "Well, maybe we'll vote against the changes to Bill 40." That means they will have voted against Bill 40 and then they will have voted against the changes to eliminate Bill 40. I don't know what their position is, but all of you who are new members will get to understand that party pretty quickly.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I am the member for Hamilton West and proud to be standing here today to deliver my first speech to this House. It was an honour to be elected on June 8 as part of the Conservative government, and I look forward to the challenges ahead.

My predecessor, Dr Richard Allen, was the representative in Hamilton West for 13 years. He is a gentleman who worked hard for his beliefs, his party and his constituents, and a man whom I respect a great deal. However, the people of Hamilton West voted for real change on June 8 and I'm proud to have won their support and to stand before you today as we embark on a journey to a better, more prosperous Ontario.

The riding of Hamilton West is of course part of the city of Hamilton and the region of Hamilton-Wentworth. The city of Hamilton will be celebrating its sesquicentennial next year, and I invite my colleagues from both sides of the House to visit Hamilton next year during this yearlong celebration.

The riding of Hamilton West has a wide distribution of incomes, and many of the problems that are found elsewhere in urban Ontario can be found here. It will be a challenging riding to represent, and I look forward to the next five years as we work towards a better Ontario for all of us.

Hamilton is known to many people in this House as the home of steel. Two towering steel giants, Stelco and Dofasco, located in the city have provided employment for Hamiltonians for many years. They are the cornerstone of Hamilton's economic growth and represent a significant number of jobs and the reason for Hamilton's reputation as Steeltown.

But Hamilton is so much more than just steel. The economy of Hamilton-Wentworth region has undergone some significant restructuring and diversification. Because of this diversification, the Hamilton-Wentworth region is well positioned to be a major competitive player in the new global economy.

Almost everyone, I'm sure, has watched some of the O.J. Simpson trial on television and probably watched the famous chase on TV last year, but not everyone knows that the cameras taking the pictures from overhead were built in Hamilton-Wentworth by Wescam Industries, the maker of highly sophisticated photographic equipment.

Hamilton's diversification from steelmaking includes the high-tech field of the environment with firms such as Philip Environmental, Laidlaw, Waxman's, and Hotz, leaders in the field of waste management and waste recycling, providing solutions for today's environmental problems.

Currently, I am pleased to say that we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country in Hamilton-Wentworth, but we have worked hard at promoting Hamilton's greatest resource, its people.

Hamilton's contributions to the arts are also worth mentioning. Hamilton's art gallery is one of the largest in Canada. The du Maurier Theatre presents live plays and operas, and Hamilton Place is the home of the Canadian Country Music Awards and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Copps Coliseum has been the locale for world-

class concerts, hockey games and figure skating, and the Canadian Juno Awards.

In addition, the Hamilton Convention Centre has hosted conventions from around the world, including all three of the major political parties in Ontario.

Hamilton is also the home of the Hamilton Tiger Cats and will be hosting the 1996 Grey Cup.

Hamilton's population is very diversified, with people from around the world making their home there. These people are hardworking, caring individuals, proud of their heritage and proud of their adopted city.

Many great leaders in the community, in Ontario and in Canada come from Hamilton. The Right Honourable Lincoln Alexander, former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, is a resident of our city. The Right Honourable Ellen Fairclough, who was the first woman to hold a ministerial position in the federal government of Canada, is also a resident of Hamilton West.

Two world-class learning facilities, McMaster University and Mohawk College, are located in Hamilton West. Excellence in education has always been a hallmark for both of these institutions.

This excellence was recognized by the Nobel Prize committee when last year they awarded Dr Bertram Brockhouse with the Nobel Prize for physics. Dr Brockhouse is one of only 14 Canadians to ever win this prestigious award.

Even NASA recognized McMaster's excellence when they sent Roberta Bondar, a graduate of and staff member at McMaster, on the space shuttle.

McMaster's efforts in the field of research are second to none, with much of the research being funded through partnerships with the private sector. One of these partnerships is the Bell Canada link with McMaster. This partnership will focus on establishing software standards across North America.

Similarly, Mohawk College is a leader in its field, working with the private sector through programs such as apprenticeships and journeyman training, and will continue to do so.

All of us on the government side of this House campaigned on the Common Sense Revolution, as mentioned in the speech from the throne. We had set out our plan well before the election and listed our priorities and the actions we would take if elected. We have already begun to take those actions and will continue to do as we promised.

There are many important issues facing Hamiltonians, but one of the most important local issues is the Red Hill Creek Expressway. This project has been ongoing for over 40 years, and finally in 1990 the expressway began. But also in 1990, with the election of the former government, the funding was pulled without any prior consultation. The region has since spent millions of dollars to fight for their right to have this road built.

One of the reasons people voted for me was because I was committed to the completion of this expressway and our party was also committed to it. I'm pleased that our government remains committed to this very vital transportation corridor, and I look forward to the day

soon when we will be driving on the Red Hill Creek Expressway.

While it is true that our government is forging ahead with welfare reform, it should be stressed that our party believes that welfare should be there for those in need as a helping hand to get people on their feet again and not as a lifestyle.

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It has been my experience in Hamilton that the community and its citizens come together to help those less fortunate than themselves. As only two examples, I would point to facilities such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, which is located in my riding, and the Amity Goodwill, which has just celebrated its 60th anniversary. Hamilton's volunteer organizations have always been leaders in the community and across Ontario.

As a matter of fact, I am happy to report that the spirit of volunteerism in Hamilton-Wentworth is alive and well today, with over 70,000 people involved in volunteer work in one way or another. Volunteers fill a very definite need in society and allow each and every one of us to make a direct, positive impact on our neighbours' lives.

I was pleased to hear in the throne speech that the Premier had appointed the member for Durham-York to look into volunteer initiatives throughout this province and would recommend that Hamilton be placed high on her list as a community that cares deeply about taking care of its own. I would invite the member for Durham-York to visit Hamilton soon and see for herself the very strong volunteer force in Hamilton.

Hamilton-Wentworth's economic development department is a leader in promoting and providing initiatives for people on welfare, whose skills can provide opportunities for innovation and initiative. Their business advisory centre has ventured into a program providing the training and expertise needed for welfare recipients wanting to start their own businesses and provides them with assistance for one year while still on welfare. The success rate of this program is approximately 87%. It has provided self-employment for 350 individuals who have in turn provided jobs for an additional 209 more. The Minister of Community and Social Services, the Honourable David Tsubouchi, has visited this facility and was so impressed by it that I understand this project may be a possible basis for future workfare programs.

The GHTEC Centre, another initiative of economic development, provides an incubator program that is highly successful helping small businesses to get started. This centre provides opportunities for high-tech industry and is growing steadily. Its success rate is phenomenal.

We were elected to bring about major change to government and to the people of this province. We continue to do just what we said we would do. We will implement the changes necessary to reach our goal: that of making Ontario a great place to live and work, the envy of the rest of the provinces across this great country of ours. I look forward to the day when we can boast that Ontario has the lowest income tax rate in the country and a balanced budget.

We will re-engineer and redefine the role of government. We will provide those services we should be providing and we will get out of those areas in which we should never have been involved in the first place.

I hope that the residents of Ontario will feel the pride of being Ontarians once again and not the burden of being overtaxed. I know, as you must know and as the residents of Hamilton West must know, that the road we are embarking on is a rocky one and not without its problems. But I believe in my heart that at the end of our journey we will look back on that road and say, "It was a bumpy ride, but thank goodness we took it, because it was worth it in the end."

I pledge my commitment here today to the residents of Hamilton West to work hard for them to the best of my ability, and I thank them for their support.

Mr Colle: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and congratulations on—you're not supposed to congratulate anybody else any more.

I'm very honoured to be representing the riding of Oakwood and I'm especially honoured as a Canadian who is Canadian by choice. I wasn't born here. Like 50% of the residents of Oakwood, I was born outside of Canada. I'm very proud of the fact that I am of Italian heritage—I was born in Italy but I came here—and I'm much more proud of the fact that I'm a citizen of Ontario and a Canadian citizen. I think for all of us it's a great privilege to serve in this historic chamber, and hopefully we can all do our best to represent the people who need our support in our certain work here.

In terms of the throne speech, I guess the most upsetting thing to me about the throne speech is that there is no reference in it to cities, no reference to the GTA, no reference to Metro. This I find very troubling because I'm really worried whether this is part of the agenda, that is, to essentially ignore the crisis that exists in all our cities and certainly exists in Ontario's largest city, which is Metropolitan Toronto.

I hope that this is not the case, because we cannot for one minute underestimate the importance of Metro to the health of Ontario, because whether we like it or not we are all interconnected—economically, socially, culturally. The old adage of saying "Well, if we can beat up on Metro, the rest of Ontario or the rest of Canada will benefit" does not apply.

I hope that this government will not do what past governments have done, and I speak of not only provincial governments but also federal governments. I know that in the past the federal government has ignored Toronto's status as a financial centre. I know that even the last Liberal provincial government imposed the commercial concentration tax on Metro which was a punitive tax. I hope that this government looks upon Metro as an investment area, an investment in its infrastructure, an investment in its people, because there are willing and able people here in Metro who want to contribute.

I know there's been this constant emphasis on welfare, welfare, welfare. In the riding of Oakwood the emphasis is on work, work, work. People are sick and tired about

hearing about welfare and welfare cuts and welfare programs. They're saying, "Let's get on to providing opportunities for work." People come into my constituency office. These are grown men and women in their 50s who have worked in factories that have been closed down, like Massey-Ferguson. They've worked on Spadina here in the garment industry. They worked for 20 years for eight, seven bucks and hour and they would beg for a job today and there are no opportunities. They go knocking door to door. They ask everybody for an opportunity just to work. They don't want a handout; they want an opportunity to sweat and to work and contribute.

That's why it was quite a rude awakening for the citizens of Oakwood when the first thing this government did was take away unilaterally, without any discussion, without any dialogue, 18,000 jobs right out of the heart of Metro and in my own riding of Oakwood. They took away a project that we had worked for 15 years to bring about, and that's the Eglinton subway. That is again a very ominous beginning for a government that claims they are interested in providing work, especially when over \$130 million were spent on preparing the site for the subway. In fact, right now, if you go to Eglinton, they're still spending money digging a sewer tunnel that they can't stop because the tunnel-boring machine can only go one way, so they have to finish that job to get out north of Eglinton. So the work's still going on and the project is somewhere in limbo.

But you talk about taking the heart and soul of a community: When you took that subway out of Oakwood, out of the city of York, you basically took away a lot of hope that people had, and these are people, as I said, who didn't want a handout. They wanted to go and work not only on the subway but invest in the small, little shops and stores. We don't have the fancy, big-time stores like you see in downtown Toronto, we don't have the huge employers, but we've got the small mom-and-pop shops that employ four or five people. They were going to reinvest in their little buildings, maybe add on an addition, employ a couple more people. They were going to fix up the front of their store, maybe add a bit more amenities to make it more attractive.

But when you took the subway away you basically said: "Hey, we don't have the same faith or hope in your community as you do. Too bad, fellows. Go find hope somewhere else because this government is not interested in talking to you about your hopes and your aspirations about work." That's the message you gave, and actions speak a lot, lot stronger than words. So there are a lot of people in my community who are totally despondent because you took that away without any discussion and you wasted \$130 million.

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The crazy thing about the way this government works or other governments work—I talk in a generic sense—is that here are projects that were worth probably \$800 million for the Eglinton, another \$1 billion for the Sheppard, not to mention the Scarborough RT. These are projects that were being discussed for 10 years, at Metro, in the cities, in Queen's Park. You would think there

would be a point in time where the provincial government would ever say, "Hey, listen, if we're going to start this project, we better be serious," because you supply 75% of the funding here at Queen's Park. "Let's make sure before we start digging these holes that we're going to follow through," because it is certainly economically, I would say, irrational to start something of that nature and waste that money, and before you get into that kind of investment, you better make sure you're going to follow through with it.

There was no discussion. I don't think it was ever discussed on the floor of this chamber whether or not this government or the government before was ever seriously committed to this. I think there were people who were committed, but this Legislature was never, as I say, clearly committed to this project which was certainly very, very significant in terms of dollars. To see it go halfway, then pulled back, is not the way you do business, certainly with taxpayers' dollars.

What I'm really concerned about is also in terms of the restructuring that is taking place in Metro and Metro's future. As you know, Metro has been hit and the GTA's been hit with a triple whammy, that is, you had the recession of the late 1980s, then you had the beginning of this new economy which caused deindustrialization, with the closure of factories, and on top of that you had a new form of work which deals with modems and work-at-home-based businesses. These three things hit Metro so hard that there were 200,000 jobs lost which have not come back to Metro to this day. The question is, how will Metro be reshaped to meet the challenges of the future, to not only make up for lost jobs but to function more economically, more rationally and more humanely in the future?

I wonder how much public consultation there will be as this government reshapes the GTA. So far, I've heard no indication that there's going to be any public consultation. Will it bring in ordinary citizens to talk about how they're going to be taxed, whether their city is going to disappear or not, whether a level of government will disappear? Will there be any public consultation? I hope there will be an opportunity for average citizens to come in and discuss the future of Metro, because we're not only talking about political boundaries and the future of politicians and trustees, we are talking about the future of people who have invested in this city—by "city" I mean Metro, the growing GTA.

They want to stay here because they've made a commitment here. I hope this government looks upon the people who have decided to stay in this city as people who are going to be its partners.

I challenge the government to look at new ways of creating wealth in the cities. Get rid of the red tape that exists. If you live in downtown Toronto or York or Etobicoke and you want to add on a little addition to your store or house, the first thing they do is increase your assessment and they penalize you for investing in your own property. I hope you get rid of that type of punitive legislation which exists in the Assessment Act.

I also hope that you look at designating Toronto as an investment area, an investment zone, because right now

Toronto, the downtown core, is in financial crisis. You can laugh all you want about Toronto and the fact that in the past it's been looked upon as the haves. Toronto is not made up of the haves any more. It does need the cooperative reaching out of all parts of Ontario to ensure that the downtown core of Toronto and Metro is healthy. If you ignore that, what you're going to do basically is you're going to set a pattern whereby all cities in Ontario will be ignored, because they follow the same pattern. I say to you that you should have an urban strategy where you get people who want to stay and invest in the downtown core.

The thing that frightens me also is that I see that this government is walking away from investing in things like public transportation which are really the backbone of a city. If you don't have affordable, workable public transportation, the city does not work. Cities that are totally dependent on automobiles do not work. If you want living proof of that, go to Detroit, go to Philadelphia, go to Boston, go to any American city that made the decision in the 1950s to go to the automobile. You can build highways till you're blue in the face and you will never make those cities work, and the cost of building highways will far outweigh any cost of building public transportation.

So I ask you to look beyond just a year or two. Look 10, 20 years down the road before you invest in just highways. There's nothing wrong with investing in roads, but you have to have a strategy, a strategic investment in public transportation.

I see Mr Palladini's here. I ask him to look at the rail infrastructure that exists in the GTA. It sits there totally untapped, with freight cars using it. We have to look at those resources. We have to look at the airport as a potential way of bringing in more economic activity to the downtown core—a rapid transit link to Pearson or revitalization of the airport at the island. We have to start examining the resources that we have available to us and to remember that we shape cities and then cities shape us. That is something that Winston Churchill said that's very basic but very true.

If you shape a city that's ugly and hostile, without any humanity in it, without good public service, you are shaping a city that is not going to be one you'll be able to walk in or work in or invest in. I hope that some of you who have an interest in the future of cities get your ministers hopefully to look upon cities as a future resource that can be regenerated and not just as vestiges, the tombstones of the past.

I want to thank you for listening and I hope that we can work together and agree on certain things, and certainly we will benefit the people of Ontario who have elected us if we can work together. But we won't work together if there is a strategy of deinvesting in people and cities. Up to this point, again, as I say, your actions have spoken much larger than words when what you've done is—the first thing you did is, you took away our future and took away our subway and said, "You don't need it." Where do people go now? Where do they go for these jobs that supposedly your strategies will create? I'm waiting.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I was watching the face of the member for Essex South as he listened to his colleague the member for Oakwood go on and on and eat into his time. I have to say that I sympathize with him because my colleague the member for Windsor-Riverside used up over half of my time as well. So I'm going to be unusually brief for me. Those of you who are new to the House may not know my reputation. I will try and hit a couple of key points.

As I was listening to the speech from the throne, I have to say it sort of reminded me of the Holiday Inn version. There were no surprises. It was all there, and quite frankly it was what we heard during the campaign; it's what we've heard in the last couple of years in the Common Sense Revolution. Many of my colleagues will speak to some of the initiatives that were set out in that throne speech, whether it be the intention to repeal parts of the labour law, the employment equity law, the advocacy commission, the cuts to welfare, massive cuts to funding of public services. Those all deserve time and debate. They're issues that stand alone and they're issues that are important.

But what I'm going to focus on in the very short time that I have are a couple of omissions from the throne speech. I have to say that I was very disturbed to hear the omission of two—well, let me say, of clear reassurances on two key campaign promises that the Progressive Conservative Party and the Premier, Mike Harris, made during that campaign.

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The first is with respect to jobs. Whether it was talking about the need to move people from welfare out into paid employment or whether it was talking about the miraculous flood of investment that was going to be coming to the province as soon as this government was elected, this party talked about jobs and made a commitment, a very clear commitment, to the creation of 725,000 jobs: a very aggressive agenda, one that I applaud, but, let me tell you, I've heard nothing about it since the day of the election. It was not in the throne speech. It was not in the Minister of Economic Development's speech today, or his statement to the House. It's disappeared. In fact, so have jobs.

Whether it be the training programs that were dedicated to the unemployed or people on social assistance, what happened to them? They were cancelled. Whether it be the day care support for people to get out and get jobs, what happened? It was cancelled. Whether it be jump-start programs targeted to youth employment and youth experience, it was cancelled. Subways, cancelled. Thousands of projects across this province that were creating jobs, cancelled.

So you tell me, where was the commitment to jobs? I didn't hear it in the throne speech; I don't see it in the actions. In fact, the actions of the government belie that commitment.

The second issue that I want to touch on was the "most important" promise, in the words of Mike Harris, on health care. Now, I've a little bit of interest in this. I spent a couple of years in the province as Minister of Health and I understand a fair bit about that large budget

and about the pressures in that budget and about the need for restructuring and the continuous improvement and finding efficiencies and ending duplication, and much was done over the last five years and there's much still to be done. And I agree with the strategy that says that money should be reinvested, but not five years from now.

What I heard during the election campaign and what the people in my riding heard over and over again from Mike Harris was that that budget was sealed, that budget was frozen; not a penny was going to be touched. I participated in a debate with the now Minister of Health on health issues during the campaign at the University of Toronto, and he promised the people in that audience not a penny would be added, but not a penny would be taken away from that budget: day after day after day it was going to be reinvested.

Now what are we hearing in the throne speech, in the responses from the Premier and the responses from the minister? "Five years from now when we stand for relection we'll be proud to see the budget restored to \$17.4 billion." What does that say about this year, about next year, about the third year of this government? That's a very different promise from the one you made to the people of this province.

I can see the discomfort on some of the faces across the way. I know that you made those promises in your campaigns as well. You didn't go out and say, "We'll get back to the \$17.4 billion in year five of our mandate." That's not what you said on the doorstep. That's not what the Conservative candidate who ran against me in Beaches-Woodbine said. Do you know what else she said? And I heard the Premier say it, Mike Harris, the candidate at that point in time, time and time again: "No new user fees in health care."

Well, what was he talking about? Now in the House he says, "In the context of the Canada Health Act, no new user fees for medically necessary services." Excuse me. Wake up. You can't do that anyway. That's what the Canada Health Act is all about. It prohibits those kinds of user fees.

What I heard, what I understood, and what I know the seniors in my riding understood was that there would be no new user fees in areas like the drug benefit program. That's what Mike Harris was talking about; that's not what he's talking about today.

Interjection: That was then; this is now.

Ms Lankin: Someone said, "That was then; this is now." We heard that a lot when we were in government and I'm tempted to use those words, but I have to say, consistent with my opening, there were no surprises even in that. That doesn't surprise me, because you know what I was saying day after day and what our leader was saying day after day in that campaign? That we knew that the plan in the Common Sense Revolution, as it is called, was not doable. We knew that you couldn't cut taxes by 30% and balance the budget and not touch the health care budget, being a third of the overall budget. One of every three dollars in this province that is spent is spent on health care. We knew you wouldn't be able to accomplish that. So we're not surprised by what we see today and what we hear today and by the knowledge that in fact

there are going to be cuts in health care. We predicted it; we knew that.

What is shocking is that no one ever got to you during the campaign and said: "Whoa, be careful. Wait a minute." Particularly when you started going up in the polls, all of the alarm bells should have gone off. You should have been more cautious, because you're stuck with it now. You're stuck with a promise, you're stuck with a commitment, and you're stuck with a Premier who said, "I will resign if I don't keep my promises."

Well, let me tell you, the people of Beaches-Woodbine want to see you keep your promises. Let me tell you, the seniors in my riding want to see no new user fees. Let me tell you, the seniors want to see no cuts to health care. They believed you. I didn't, and I don't believe that you're going to deliver it now.

Do you know what is the most cynical thing? This has got nothing to do with the, once again, created crisis this is the modus operandi of this government: create a crisis, blame it on someone else—the created crisis, the fiscal crisis that you talk about, the created crisis of the dollars in order to balance the deficit. This has got nothing to do with balancing the deficit. This has got everything to do with paying for a tax cut that is going to benefit the wealthiest in this province. The middle class is going to see none. Those who would spend the money at the lower end of the income tax scale will see no benefit from this and yet those are the people who're being affected by the cuts, the deep, deep cuts that will affect the very fabric of our communities in order to pay for your tax break for the wealthy. That's what's so cynical. That's what's so shameful.

It is not necessary for you to continue down this path. It is not necessary for you to destroy institutions and fabrics of communities in order to give more money for the wealthy, but it's the road that you have chosen.

I was disappointed in the throne speech. I was disappointed by those omissions, and day after day I and my colleagues will be bringing that home to you in question period and out across the province because the people will want to know whether or not you intend to keep all of your promises.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): Mr Speaker, I want to start by congratulating you on your election to the position of Speaker of the House. I know you will serve the people of Ontario in this position with honour and distinction.

Can you feel it? Can you feel the new wave of confidence sweeping across the province of Ontario?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): We can feel it. We can feel it.

Mr Wettlaufer: I'm glad. Can you sense the collective sigh of relief the hardworking taxpayers of this province are heaving, knowing that now when they go to work each morning there is finally a government in power which is working in their interests? Can you feel the warm glow of acceptance this government is already experiencing as the taxpayers start recognizing that this government is committed to doing exactly what it said it would in the election campaign; that is, to bring common

sense to the government for the first time in over a decade?

It is truly an honour and a privilege to represent the people of Kitchener here today. I think it noteworthy to mention that I am the first Progressive Conservative to be elected to the Ontario Legislature in the history of the Kitchener riding—

Applause.

Mr Wettlaufer: Thank you, thank you—a riding which was formed three decades ago. It took us a long time to get here, but we are here now and I intend to use every ounce of my energy to help shape the future of this great province.

Mr Marchese: Did you feel the wind?

Mr Wettlaufer: That's the hot air from down there. I was born in Kitchener, raised my family in Kitchener and I've been involved in business in the Kitchener area for over 30 years. I know the people of my riding well.

When I first decided to seek the nomination, and even during the campaign, I was continually asked by my friends, why was I running. My friends wanted to know, why was I willing to postpone a successful business career and disrupt my family life to run for office with a party that didn't stand a chance of winning the election, in a riding which would never elect a Progressive Conservative MPP?

I was driven by a sense of fear, a sense of anger and the realization that the futures of our children and grandchildren were in jeopardy. My daughter is in the balcony up here—

Applause.

Mr Wettlaufer: She's embarrassed. Stand up. She doesn't want to.

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I wanted to be part of the solution to the \$100-billion debt which is sapping nearly \$9 billion a year in interest payments alone, a debt which was growing at the rate of \$10 billion per year, a debt which was being passed on to our children and grandchildren, a debt which was created by the two previous governments over the past 10 years. That is why my primary campaign theme was, "For the love of our children." "For the love of our children" is such an easy thought, such a simple philosophy, yet it was this philosophy which brought my campaign team together with an adhesiveness and energy unlike any I had seen before.

The Common Sense Revolution includes the basic policies that my team believed were necessary to implement in order to ensure that our legacy to our children and grandchildren was a strong and vibrant province. When canvassing in the election campaign, in my one-onone, eye-to-eye conversations with the voters, the common major factor became how they loved their children as we loved our children and why our party policies were the only hope we had of reshaping the province into the type of province they wanted, which they believed best exemplified the type of province they wanted to leave as their legacy to their children and grandchildren. They didn't want to leave a \$100-billion debt as their legacy to their children and grandchildren.

Let me tell you a little about my riding. Kitchener is a fiercely proud city, a fiercely independent city. For almost 200 years, Kitchener has been built upon entrepreneurial spirit. It was in the early 1800s that Joseph Schneider brought his family from Pennsylvania to our region.

Today, J.M. Schneider is still operated by the Schneider family and is one of the largest meat packing companies in North America. It is by no accident that one of Canada's most successful meat and specialty food retailers is also centred in Kitchener and has grown on this tradition. M&M Meat Shops was begun by Mac Voison, a Kitchener entrepreneur who has been recognized within the business community as one of Canada's leading businessmen.

Kitchener has long held dear the traditional values of hewers of wood and drawers of water, the values our forefathers held dear. It is a working-class riding, much as you would find in Hamilton, Sudbury, Windsor, Kapuskasing and hundreds of other small towns and cities in the province. There isn't much fancy about us, but our people survive by the sweat of their brows, the strength of their backs and the depth of their intellects. Kitchener boasts one of the highest employment rates in the country because of its work ethic.

Kitchener is not only independent; it is loyal to its own. Just ask companies like Loblaws, which could only penetrate the Kitchener market by absorbing Kitchener companies such as Zehrs.

Our young people are the pride of our community. You will find hundreds of them involved in the famous marching bands such as the Dutch Boy Drum and Bugle Corps, which is recognized throughout North America. We are proud of our young people, whether they be in the schools, at the arenas, on the ball diamonds, in the community centres or volunteering in the hospitals. It is my belief that the youth of Kitchener exemplifies all that is good in our country and that bodes well for our future as a province.

I look forward to the day that I can sit with my grandchildren and tell them about the days I was an elected representative in the government of Ontario.

I am looking forward to telling them the story of how, back in the 1990s, we reshaped the educational system and how we reinvested the millions of dollars which were being wasted by mammoth bureaucracies and how we redirected the money into classroom spending and how they have a better education system because of it.

I am looking forward to telling my grandchildren the story of how we took power away from an ideologically driven, quasi-socialist government which had no sense of understanding how business operated and whose systems forced small businesses to spend up to 20% of their time filling out government forms instead of spending time creating jobs and paying taxes to reduce the \$100-billion debt.

I am looking forward to explaining how thousands of small businesses were able to flourish and grow, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs because our government reduced unnecessary red tape, helped stabilize operating costs by fixing Hydro rates for five years, reduced payroll taxes, eliminated an employer health tax and reduced workers' compensation rates by 5%.

Before I close, I would like to advise that we have a mammoth Oktoberfest celebration beginning this Friday and lasting for 10 days, and I would like to invite all of my friends and adversaries alike to the celebration.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I'm very pleased to have the remaining time this evening to talk a little bit—

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, with responsibility for Francophone Affairs): Another leadership candidate.

Mr Ramsay: Oh, I don't think so—to talk a bit about my riding and also to say that I'm very happy to be with a renewed bunch of men and women that have been elected to this Legislature. I've been very impressed with the speeches. There's a lot of enthusiasm here, and I look forward to working with people from all sides over the next four or five years in trying to make Ontario a better place. I think everybody here has that in mind.

I'd like to just talk a little bit about my riding of Timiskaming in northeastern Ontario. Like many of my colleagues in this House and especially in our party that come from northern Ontario, we have traditionally had a set of challenges to us, being resource dependent, where employment has always, always been a problem.

In this particular case, we had those perennial issues before us but also we had some new issues and one that is currently going on. I'd like to give a sort of an update to the people of this House on where we stand, and that is in regard to the disposal of garbage from Metropolitan Toronto to the proposed Adams mine site near Kirkland Lake.

This became a very big issue during the election. In fact, I guess unfortunately, Metro Toronto began an environmental assessment process two weeks before the election did start. At that time, it really galvanized the opinion of the people in our area about this project, and I would report to this House today that the vast majority of people in the Timiskaming district do not want to see Metropolitan Toronto taken north to Kirkland Lake.

I would say that I have been working with the constituents, and I'd like to say to the members here that while many talk about their revolutions and the things they want to do here in Toronto on behalf of the whole province, I will tell all the new members here today you will find no greater satisfaction than working on your local issues, working with the people you were elected to represent and to represent them proudly and do the job that they've asked you to do.

The local issues, to me, are the most important. Government comes and goes, and sometimes you have an opportunity to play a role in government, sometimes minor, sometimes major. But in the end it's the people at home that elect you to serve them, and serving them and doing that job well will serve you proud when you look back upon your years here.

This project on Metropolitan garbage is ongoing. It's gotten me into a little bit of hot water because I feel

passionately about it, and I'm being sued by one of the mayors of my municipalities for things I've said about this. I am not backing down. What has happened is that people are trying to coerce me to change my political opinion, and I will not, about this particular stand that I hold on Metropolitan garbage.

I believe, and I would say to this government, that we have to investigate the definition of what makes a willing host when it comes to regional megaprojects such as this and I believe that we have to, in law, allow the people of any region or county or district to be able to hold a referendum on any major project such as this.

This is what I've been fighting for in our area. In fact, in the town of Kirkland Lake, this was promised, and now the town council of Kirkland Lake has said: "No, we no longer need a referendum. The first one we had to see

if we would proceed with an environmental assessment should suffice." The people of Kirkland Lake to this time have been denied that second referendum on whether they want to proceed with this project or not.

I have made a commitment to my constituents that I will continue my commitment to have a referendum, not only in the potential willing host area, but also any area beyond that that the EA might show is affected by this project.

I would say to all of you that these local issues are the ones that are the most important, and I wish you all well in carrying out your duties in that regard.

The Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Allan K. McLean

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Agostino, Dominic Arnott, Ted Baird, John R. Barrett, Toby Bartolucci, Rick	Hamilton East / -Est Wellington Nepean	L PC	
Baird, John R. Barrett, Toby		PC	
Barrett, Toby	Nepean		
		PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Bartolucci, Rick	Norfolk	ND	
	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	. ND	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	•
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	minute delegate a la condition femiline

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités			
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales			
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC				
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC				
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L				
Ecker, Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires			
Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda	Guelph	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie			
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance, government House leader / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances, leader parlementaire du gouvernement			
Fisher, Barb	Bruce	PC				
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce			
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC				
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward- Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	PC				
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC				
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	L	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie			
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L				
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC				
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L				
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L				
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme			
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie			
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND				
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement			
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones			
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif			
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC				
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines			
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L _.				
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC				
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio, Workers' Compensation Board / ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de la Commission des accidents du travail			
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé			

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités			
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative			
Johnson, Hon / L'hon Dave	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion			
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC				
Jordan, Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement			
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC				
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles			
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND				
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L				
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L				
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	New Democratic Party whip / whip du Nouveau Parti démocratique			
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND				
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement			
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC				
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND				
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC				
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND				
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND				
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC				
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC				
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L				
McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	Speaker / Président			
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition			
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition			
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative			
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre			
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines			
Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs			
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to minister responsible for native affairs adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones			
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind				
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC				
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports			
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports			
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC				
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L				
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC				
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L				
*	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND				

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités		
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC			
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L			
Rae, Bob	York South / -Sud	ND			
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L			
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC			
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC			
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels		
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L			
Sampson, Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances		
Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme		
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L			
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC			
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique		
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation		
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC			
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation		
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme		
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.	Carleton	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce		
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC			
Stockwell, Chris	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC			
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC			
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général		
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.	Markham	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires		
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement		
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC			
Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G & Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales ; ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones		
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	*		
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND			
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé		
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail		
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion		
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND			
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation		







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First Session, 36th Parliament

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Wednesday 4 October 1995

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 4 octobre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 octobre 1995

The House met at 1333. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS CLOSURE OF HALFWAY HOUSES

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): My statement is directed to the Solicitor General and the Minister of Correctional Services regarding the closure of the halfway house in Red Lake, also known as the community rehab centre.

Minister, promising to decentralize government decision-making was a fundamental commitment of your party during the election campaign. Mr Harris said repeatedly that made-in-Toronto solutions would not be imposed on northern communities and that northern towns would be given the flexibility to determine their own future.

Well, we shouldn't be surprised to hear that yet another Harris promise has been broken. I have just been made aware, Minister, that a directive from your ministry is responsible for the closure of a very successful community rehabilitation centre in the town of Red Lake. Within the past 24 hours, the Red Lake CRC was closed, seven clients of the program were transferred to the Kenora district jail—over 250 kilometres away—one client, who was employed, was even removed from his job, and 15 CRC employees have been placed out of work.

You must realize that your simpleminded directives from Toronto just won't work in the north. Furthermore, this was a program operated by some of the most dedicated people I have met in my political life. The employees have lost their jobs; their clients have lost a method of rehabilitation that worked. I repeat, Minister, your ministry has lost a program that worked. As well, we have 15 more people in the north who have joined the ranks of the unemployed.

NORTHERN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I direct my statement today to the Premier, the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, and the minister responsible for native affairs.

Who's going to help the vulnerable and the needy? So far, the only indication we have from the government is that you plan to promote and encourage volunteerism in this province. This apparently is the spirit of Ontario.

I agree with you that volunteerism is a virtue and that it should be encouraged, and I look forward to many executives volunteering for the public service, but there are many groups, small and large, who have worked hard over the years and who provide an excellent service to those in need in the community. They too are the spirit of Ontario.

The Kapuskasing Regional Resource Centre for Independent Living requested funding from the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation last May in the amount of \$55,000, a very small amount, \$30,000 of which is needed to keep them operating. Despite prompting from them and from my office, they have not received a response to this request. Last Friday, the executive director was laid off, leaving only one staff member to run the centre.

The Ininew Friendship Centre is in fear of having its community programs cut, as is the Moosonee Native Friendship Centre. Specifically, they are concerned about their Little Beavers program and their community development worker program. Both are very necessary for the native communities. Any loss or cuts to these programs will be detrimental to those at risk.

These people are established, dedicated to their work and the people they serve. They would like to hear from you now, not two months from now. What do you plan to do? As it stands now, they are waiting for the axe to fall.

BAYER RUBBER

Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia): I am very pleased to announce to this House that the city of Sarnia has attracted a \$60-million investment by one of the 50 largest industrial companies in the world.

Bayer Rubber is spending \$50 million on two new plants, one to produce tungsten carbide and the other to produce nickel hydroxide, bringing jobs and opportunities to Sarnia-Lambton. The additional \$10 million is being invested in environmental improvement, as well as a \$500,000 community foundation. Improved pollution controls will help Sarnia maintain its clean environment, and the foundation will support community projects such as education, sciences, arts and culture.

Bayer already employs about 1,370 workers in Sarnia. Sarnia was one of several sites considered in North America, and being the area selected is recognition that business can grow and prosper in Sarnia-Lambton. Here is a prime example of cooperation between business and community. I am proud to say on behalf of Sarnia that Bayer has given our community a deserving vote of confidence. Sarnia is open for business. We welcome new investment to Sarnia-Lambton.

1340

WORLD TEACHERS DAY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I rise to inform the House, and in particular the Minister of Education and Training, that tomorrow is designated by the United Nations as being World Teachers Day.

The teachers of Ontario deserve this day of special honour. Teachers realize that students do not come to school all equal, so through their ingenuity, tireless efforts and dedication, they provide a meaningful individualized day for each of their students. They face real crises, not invented ones, every single, solitary day and they handle them in a very mature, responsible and loving way. They impact most directly and most positively on the life of each of their charges.

On a very personal note, I would like to thank all those wonderful teachers who have had such a profound influence on the lives and successes of my children, such as Dick Van Radshoven, Mary Ann Bellowis, Libby Marinelli and Jerome Perusini, to mention only a few.

Further, as a principal on leave, I was surrounded for 30 years by excellence in pedagogy with the likes of Lorraine Dupuis, Denise Massimilliano, John Pianosi and Maureen Doan—so many like those mentioned who care, who truly care, and provide for their students before, during and after school hours.

Mr Speaker, I hope you, this House and in particular the Minister of Education will join with me and the United Nations in saluting the teachers of Ontario. Bravo to all of you. You are worthy of our recognition, our support and our thanks.

HAEMODIALYSIS

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Last week, in response to a question, the Health minister said, "I want you to know that in the time I was Health critic...I personally lost seven friends in Collingwood and Alliston because of the inability of the previous government to do anything but study the dialysis issue in this province." I expected him to correct the record by now, but since he hasn't, let me outline the facts on dialysis.

Under our government, funding for services was significantly increased. In May 1994, a \$23-million expansion of services was completed in areas where treatment had been weak or non-existent.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Dufferin-Peel is out of order.

Ms Martel: In June 1994, an \$11-million expansion of services at existing facilities in central Ontario got under way. In November 1994, another \$10.9 million was announced to expand services in hospitals outside central Ontario.

I was involved in the November announcement. Laurentian Hospital in Sudbury received \$1.3 million more in capital and operating funds to expand its hospital and satellite clinic services. The communities of Elliot Lake, Little Current, Kapuskasing, New Liskeard and Timmins all benefited as a result.

That same week, money for dialysis treatment went to Sault Ste Marie, Kenora, Thunder Bay, St Catharines, Kitchener-Waterloo, Kingston, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Windsor and even the Premier's home town of North Bay.

Not only was the information the minister gave not correct, but the way he decided to choose to respond means that from now on he should not be surprised when he himself is held personally responsible for a failure in the health care system.

OKTOBERFEST

Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot): I would like to acknowledge that for over a quarter of a century Kitchener-Waterloo has taken on the sights and sounds of an old-fashioned Bavarian holiday. Every year, North America's largest Bavarian festival is host to visitors from around the world as they converge on Kitchener-Waterloo, the heart of Canada's technology triangle.

I would like to encourage the members of this House and the people of Ontario to experience Oktoberfest as it begins this Friday, October 6, and ends the following Saturday, October 14.

CANNED FOOD SAFETY

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): When asked, "How are parents trapped on welfare supposed to feed their kids after the Tory cuts?" the Minister of Community and Social Services replied that these people should try to barter or beg for dented cans of tuna. Needless to say, these comments have left a bad taste in people's mouths.

Let me take a moment to re-introduce to the House, to my friend from yesterday, a dented can of tuna.

On a serious note, this morning I contacted an official with the food production and inspection branch at Agriculture Canada. This official warned me about the very serious health threat that could exist with the purchase of dented cans. This official advised that consumers should never buy cans which are dented at the top or bottom seam where the lid is attached, as airborne botulism spores will often enter the can through microscopic holes. He went on to say that while dented cans are for the most part safe, extreme caution must be exercised when purchasing these products.

Ten years ago, one of Brian Mulroney's cabinet ministers tried to pass tainted tuna on to an unsuspecting public; 10 years later, Mike Harris's minister is trying to do the exact same thing.

So as the public says to the minister, "Sorry, Charlie, your answers just ain't good enough," I say to the minister, it's time for real jobs, real solutions and an end to all these fish stories.

SEWAGE TREATMENT

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Yesterday, I was pleased to rise and make a statement with respect to an issue of important environmental concern in the riding of Beaches-Woodbine, and that is with respect to water quality and the dredging of the water.

Because, probably, we are a waterfront community, you may come to realize with the statements that I will be making that issues of environmental concern are of extreme importance to the people of Beaches-Woodbine. Today, I want to address another, and that is the operation of the Ashbridges Bay sewage treatment plant. Particularly I'd like to address my statement to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

I want to say to the minister that I am aware that she has recently written to the Public Committee for Safe Sewage in my community, indicating that she is undertaking a review of the previous minister's decision with respect to an environmental assessment on the western

beaches tank tunnel. I say to the minister, this is wrongheaded.

In her letter she gives a reason for this review, that this has been requested by the city. I am not aware of any direction from city council with respect to this. City council has taken a clear position not to prioritize the western tank tunnel, not to support it as a project under the Canada-Ontario infrastructure works program, for the very reason of the environmental and ecological concerns that all waterfront residents of Metro Toronto share with respect to the treatment of sewage and with respect to a move to a ban on incineration.

I say to the minister that if she's got some innocuous request from the engineering department of the city of Toronto, please don't listen to them, listen to the people. The people have spoken and made their views known. I urge you not to review and to uphold the previous decision of the previous minister.

EVENTS IN HASTINGS-PETERBOROUGH

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): I rise for two reasons today. I'd like to begin by thanking the fine people of Hastings-Peterborough for the confidence they have demonstrated in our party and our Common Sense plan with my victory on election day. I will honour their trust to the best of my ability.

As well, I'd like to advise all members of the House of two events taking place in my riding this weekend.

The annual Norwood Fall Fair has been a Thanks-giving tradition since 1868 and this year is no exception. Norwood is the Friendly Town, and the fair is an opportunity to demonstrate the civic pride of the community and the friendly atmosphere which is so prevalent in Hastings-Peterborough.

The fair features something for all ages, including livestock and agricultural displays, live entertainment, a midway and a craft show. Visitors from all over Ontario seem drawn to this event, which at times has set provincial records for attendance.

This weekend is also very special in Cavendish township. At noon on Saturday a planting ceremony will take place honouring the efforts of area veterans and to recognize their contribution during the Second World War. The garden will feature 400 tulip bulbs from Holland in appreciation of the liberation of that country by Canadians.

I'd like to invite and encourage all members of the House to enjoy the beautiful fall splendour of rural Ontario this weekend, and to assure them of a warm greeting and old-fashioned country hospitality in Norwood and Cavendish township, two communities typical of the friendly places in Hastings-Peterborough.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from the People's Republic of China, headed by Mr Fusheng Liu, accompanied by Mr Wenzhao Chen, consul general, and Mr Renshen Chen, vice-consul of the People's Republic of China. Welcome to the assembly.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): I am pleased to announce that later this afternoon I will be introducing a package of labour law reforms designed to revitalize Ontario's economy, to create jobs and to restore a much-needed balance to labour-management relationships in our province.

We believe that the current Labour Relations Act is a barrier to jobs, growth and investment. In a global economy, Ontario cannot afford to be perceived as anything less than welcoming to the initiative, the imagination and job creation potential of the private sector.

The package of reforms that I will introduce includes the repeal of Bill 40, the NDP labour law, and steps to introduce workplace democracy in Ontario.

We believe that the repeal of this bill will restore the balance in labour relations, will attract new investment, will spur economic growth and generate new job opportunities for all of the workers. Once we have levelled the playing field in labour relations, Ontario's natural assets and highly skilled workforce will become obvious drawing cards for investors and businesses looking to grow and expand.

Our package consists of five key components.

First of all, as our government promised during the recent election campaign, we are repealing the NDP labour law, Bill 40. One of the symbolic and practical problems with Bill 40 was that it tilted the delicate labour relations balance in favour of organized labour. Repeal will restore the balance to the legislation.

We will couple repeal with amendments aimed at increasing democracy in the workplace and enhancing the rights of the individual workers. Towards this end, secret ballot votes will be made mandatory for union certifications, contract ratifications and strike votes. Each individual will now have the democratic right to vote on whether or not they want to be represented by a trade union.

Our labour law reforms also include the repeal of the NDP government's Bill 91, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act. This action to repeal Bill 91 recognizes that unionization of the family farm has no place in Ontario's key agricultural sector.

Along with the repeals of Bill 40 and Bill 91, our government is amending certain provisions of the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act. My colleagues the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Chair of Management Board will be speaking in greater detail about their respective areas of responsibility.

The final component of our package is the reform of the employee wage protection program through amendments to the Employment Standards Act. Members may recall my announcement last month indicating that changes would be made to the program. Even with the changes we are making, Ontario's wage protection program is still the best in the country. Indeed, it will remain far more generous than those of Quebec and

Manitoba, which are the only two other provinces which have a wage protection program.

We believe this package of labour law reforms will not only enhance the rights of the individual workers but will bring about positive change in our economy. Moreover, it will be the impetus for major growth and greater job opportunities in the decades to come, because it will send out a strong signal that Ontario is open for business once again.

Hon Dave Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): It is my privilege to rise today in support of the legislation and specifically, as Chair of Management Board, to address those areas that deal with amendments to the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act.

My colleague the Minister of Labour has outlined our intention to replace Bill 40 with legislation that we believe will restore balance to the labour law environment in Ontario. Part of this legislation includes amendments to the statute that governs labour relations in the Ontario public service and crown agencies, the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, and the Public Service Act to respond to the changes brought about by the repeal of Bill 40 and to increase the flexibility of the government as employer.

First, I want to assure you that nothing in these amendments fundamentally alters the collective bargaining rights of the vast majority of Ontario government employees. Second, the government employees will retain the right to strike. Third, unions will continue to be able to organize, bargain and arbitrate grievances.

This government has clearly stated its commitment to a smaller, more efficient public service. We have said we will provide the people of Ontario with better government for less. The proposed amendments will help us reach those goals.

I would like to give some details on the proposed amendments. The proposed CECBA amendments will exempt the crown from the application of successor rights. Exempting the crown from the application of successor rights gives government the flexibility it needs to restructure.

Further, we propose to amend the Public Service Act to harmonize with notice provisions in the private sector, so that employees not covered by collective agreements can be released with reasonable notice or compensation instead of notice.

Also, we propose to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to ensure the confidentiality of labour relations information.

In closing, let me say this government is acting on its commitment to provide the people of Ontario with better government for less. The legislation outlined here today is a big step in that direction.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, with responsibility for Francophone Affairs): I too am pleased to elaborate on an important aspect of the labour law reform package just announced by my colleague the Minister of Labour. I am

referring, of course, to the repeal of the Agricultural Labour Relations Act, Bill 91. Our farmers, who are on the agrifood industry's front lines, are looking to us to help them maintain their competitive edge in the new global marketplace.

As was pointed out by my honourable colleague, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act is aimed directly at unionizing the family farm. We do not believe in the unionization of the family farm. Agriculture is very much a unique industry and therefore should not be subject to industrial-style collective bargaining and arbitration.

In addition to repealing the bill, we're taking another critical step; that is, we are strengthening the agricultural exemption by providing a comprehensive definition of "agriculture" in the proposed labour bill, a definition that previously did not exist.

Our farmers have traditionally proved to be good employers, and I know they have what it takes to continue being fair and even-handed in their dealings with those who work for them.

Simply, to sum it up, government interference is not a viable alternative in agriculture.

1400

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): The legislation the minister is tabling later today will not do what she suggests it will do. It will not restore balance. Rather, this government's legislation and this government's agenda will create a climate that will cause investors to leave this province and thereby create even higher unemployment than we've become accustomed to.

This government's policies in the field of labour relations and a variety of other areas are a recipe for recession, a recipe for violence, an unnecessary attempt to kick sand in the face of working people in this province. Job creation, investment, labour productivity, days lost to strikes have all improved in the last few years—our economy performed strongly—and we think this is unnecessary and unduly provocative.

The Tory ads in the recent campaign clearly said the Liberal Party would not repeal Bill 40 in its entirety, and they were correct. This short-sighted legislation will provoke unnecessarily confrontation and violence in the workplace. The result will be decreased productivity, profits, investment and jobs. Government must once again become the honest broker in labour relations. Both sides must be able to count on government to be fair and honest.

The NDP government mishandled labour relations by ignoring the legitimate concerns of the province's management committee. The NDP was a false friend to labour. Their legacy is one of stripped contracts—they stripped contracts. Their friends in the labour movement still won't talk to them. They should be ashamed of their record. Had they handled it better, they wouldn't be in this position today.

I urge you, Minister, not to make the same mistakes your predecessors did. Don't shut out—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The member for Etobicoke West is out of order.

Mr Duncan: —one of the partners in growth. Don't create a climate of disincentive to investment.

Minister, our party does now, as it did prior to the election, support the repeal of Bill 91 in recognition of the unique nature of our agricultural industry. We think it's a shame, however, that you broke your promise by cutting funding to agriculture in this province. We think that's a shame.

To the Chair of Management Board, we wish you well, sir, but this government is a recipe for recession, and when the social contract comes off you will have to deal with it, and we'll respond.

We feel that these policies, taken together, will harm productivity, growth and investment in this economy. We think you're going too far, too fast. We're all going to have to work together to prevent the recession this government is creating by its policies and by its deliberate attempt to provoke one of the partners in economic growth in this economy. Shame on you.

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I am pleased to respond to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' statement today on repealing Bill 91. I have been involved in agriculture all my life, and as I travelled around this province I found no support for Bill 91. It just adds to the problems of agriculture, along with the competition, the weather conditions and all the rest of the things facing agriculture. The other thing I have to mention here is that farmers have faced cuts in the agriculture budget for many years.

On behalf of the 150,000 people who work in agriculture on farms I would congratulate the government for knowing right from wrong on this issue. Our party would have handled it somewhat differently, I guess, had we been chosen to govern. We would have had more consultation among the groups that support it—although I have not found any up till now. Anyway, it doesn't hurt any government to listen to the people.

I'm pleased that the government has taken this initiative and I look forward to working with them on it.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Not since the government of R.B. Bennett and Mitch Hepburn have we seen a government in this country and in this province so dedicated to abandoning the rights and needs that workers have in this province, and today proves the point.

There has been unprecedented labour peace in this province since Bill 40. We know; the record is there. The record shows that in 1993, the very year that Bill 40 was enacted, there was the lowest number of person-days lost due to work stoppages in the history of the province, and in 1994, we had the third-lowest number of days lost due to work stoppages.

We know that 98% of all collective agreements in 1993 were settled without a strike, and in 1994, 97% of all collective agreements.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): There aren't any strikes when no one has jobs. They have to be working in the first place.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Etobicoke West, you're out of order.

Mr Christopherson: This is not about restoring balance. This is about going after workers and blaming workers.

Specifically, one of the things here is to take back the legislation on replacement workers—and replacement workers, the way this government is going, is about pitting workers against workers.

When there are lawful strikes—and there aren't many, and I've been at the bargaining table many times—when it's necessary to have a strike it means that something has broken down, and the strike is one step in the process of trying to resolve that. There's a balance there that recognizes that the workers are withdrawing their labour but they're also not receiving the paycheque, and the employer cannot produce the product or provide the service but they're not putting out the cost of wages, and then it becomes a tension to see who can outlast the other.

This government wants to go back to the kind of thing we saw in the Yukon where people were killed because, during a lawful strike, an employer called in the police—who, by the way, are no more interested in getting involved in the middle of these disputes than anyone else, but they have a job to do, a lawful responsibility, and they're called in to push those workers aside to let the replacement workers come in.

Now, with the freezing of minimum wage and the cutting back on social services and the attack on the poor and the abandonment of children—that's a litany of the things this government has done—they're creating a world of desperate workers, and when faced with the option of whether or not to cross that line, many will look at their families and say, "I have no choice." You will be directly responsible for every person hurt on a picket line in this province because of the steps you're taking today.

And talking about democracy in the workplace, this government wouldn't know democracy in the workplace if it walked up and bit them.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Etobicoke West is out of order.

Mr Christopherson: What they care about is creating an imbalance. They don't care about real democracy in the workplace or they never would have eliminated the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, which is a model of cooperation between employees and employers. That's gone too.

In three months, this government has clearly said: "The poor are to blame for the problems in this province. Children's needs are the problem. Single parents are to blame. Workers are to blame." You wrap them all up in special-interest-group labels and then give them the back of your hand.

This is the proof that this government does not care about working people and is prepared to abandon them on the road to its new revolution.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I'd like to respond to the announcement by the Minister of Agriculture, first of all to say to him that he will try to create the

impression that the Agricultural Labour Relations Act was aimed, somehow, at the unionization of the family farm. He knows that is not true. He knows that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture participated in the drafting of that bill and saw clearly that it was aimed at dealing with that variety of agricultural processing plants that are much like steel plants, auto plants and paper mills in that they employ several hundred people and do processing work. It is impossible to segregate and somehow move them away from other types of manufacturing in the province. You may try all the fancy words in the world; you will not take away those workers' charter rights.

1410

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday, the Minister of Community and Social Services indicated to members of the House that he had a budget that would show how welfare recipients would be able to live on the reduced payments that they were receiving.

As you will recall, he indicated not only that he had that budget, but that he would make it available to members of the opposition. We have been trying persistently and unsuccessfully since yesterday to obtain a copy of the budget. We understand that his ministry staff may now be preparing a copy of a budget.

But, Mr Speaker, if you review the statement that the minister made in the House yesterday, I think you will agree that he clearly indicated—in fact pointed to—a budget, said it was available and he would make it available to us. I would ask you to determine whether or not that minister misled the House yesterday.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I will review what the member has just said.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is to the Premier. Premier, yesterday we were shocked to learn that your government had taken action to close 25 halfway houses across this province. Today, I am absolutely appalled to learn of your government's decision to put women and children at risk by cutting funding for second-stage housing projects for victims of spousal violence.

Premier, we've spoken to the second-stage housing alliance about the impact of those cuts. We understand that your cuts will affect approximately 400 women and 800 children across this province. These are women and children who have been forced to flee from their homes because of violence.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Very predictable.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Nickel Belt is out of order.

Mrs McLeod: They spend, as I'm sure you know, up to six weeks in emergency shelter and then they move to the second-stage programs that have been set up to help them live independently so that they don't have to return to an abusive home.

We know that these programs are cost-effective. We know that they have proven that women can leave violent situations and live independently. I'll offer you one example, Premier: a second-stage housing project in Haldimand-Norfolk which has served 142 families since December 1991. Of those, 138 people were able to start an independent life.

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: These are programs that work. Cutting the programs means that women and children will be forced to return to violent homes. I ask you, Premier, how can you endanger the safety of women and children? How can you deny them a refuge when they are forced to flee a violent situation?

Applause.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Thank you very much. Was that for me or for the member? I'm sorry.

Mrs McLeod: Don't be flippant on this, Mike.

Hon Mr Harris: I think we're dealing with a very serious matter. I know the minister responsible for women's issues is prepared to respond.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, with responsibility for Women's Issues): It's my pleasure to respond to the question because I think every member in this House will be interested in a direct response, and the direct response is this: It is correct that we have made changes in the programs in second-stage housing, but I think it's very important that every member in this House and every community in this province understand that we will not be touching the residential component of second-stage housing.

Right now in the province of Ontario, we are supporting over 98 shelters; that's what you would refer to possibly as first-stage housing. All of us in this House know that at this difficult time in Ontario we must work together to provide efficient, effective programs, and every woman and man in this House knows that in their own communities there is room for more efficiencies.

I met with a group of women on Monday morning in Toronto looking at that very program who told us that there is room for more coordination and efficiencies.

The Speaker: Would you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I should remind all members in this House that this group had met for the first time in a year. If we're looking at coordinating and efficiencies and providing a future for these same women and children who are abused, we'd better get our house in order, our efficient budget in order, get rid of the deficit and start providing jobs for those women in Ontario.

Mrs McLeod: It's difficult for me to believe that even in this first—what is it?—10 days we've been back in the House, the minister responsible for women's issues has been forced by her Premier into giving this House that kind of an answer. This minister knows full well that the second-stage housing provides both a physical place for the families who have been forced to leave their homes; it also provides the counselling that gives them the support they need to make the adjustments to living

independently and in fact to find the jobs that allow them to live independently.

I think this minister knows full well, as she sits around the cabinet table, that for this government, any cut, any cut at all, is a good cut. They really don't seem to care over there about anything or anybody. They don't care about the impact of the cuts they're making.

I say to the minister who has given me this response that we've also talked to the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses; we've talked to people who are in the emergency shelter programs—yes, indeed, the first place of refuge for women and children who are forced to leave—and they are concerned about the impact of these cuts, because they're there; they can barely meet the demands for crisis response.

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: They cannot provide longer-stage housing; they cannot become a revolving door for women and children who are going to be forced by these cuts back into violent and abusive situations. So what do you tell them, Minister? What do you tell these people in the emergency shelters as to how they should respond to the crisis situations? How can they provide the refuge that's needed, and where was your voice when this decision was made?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I would like to speak first of all to where my voice is in this cabinet. That is that I believe strongly that we must support and in fact increase effective programs for women and children in the province of Ontario. It would be very helpful if all members of this House go out to the communities today and tell them that those places for emergency need in first- and second-stage housing will still be there. I expect that kind of response from the media as well.

The worst thing that we can do in this province is to put out scare tactics so that women and children who are already concerned about their future and their safety—an availability of space for them is there. I think the wrong approach for any elected members representing their communities is to send—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Would the member take her seat, please.

Mrs McLeod: I'm sure there is a correct response as this government would like the response to be understood, but there is also a reality that will face women and children who are forced to leave abusive situations. They will be forced back into those abusive and potentially violent situations because they will not have the support they need.

Interjection.

Mrs McLeod: I wish the Premier, who now interjects, had been prepared to answer the question, because I take him back to the throne speech, which I believe was a document that's supposed to carry the commitment of this Premier as well as his government.

The Speaker: Put your question through the Chair, please.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, I am addressing the

Premier and the minister, through you, and reminding them, through you, that this government promised in the throne speech to bring in a Victims' Bill of Rights, and they promised as well to right "the balance between those who live outside the law and those who depend on the law for protection." And yet the first thing this government does is to cut the support for victims of violence.

I ask, through you, the minister and, through her, the Premier, what has happened to that commitment? How can you possibly speak of a commitment to helping victims when you are stripping programs which protect women and children who are clearly victims of violence?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: The member is quite correct and we agree with her that we believe too much focus has been given to the rights of criminals over the past number of years and not enough on the rights of victims. That is why this government, unlike the previous two governments, will introduce a Victims' Bill of Rights. 1420

CLOSURE OF HALFWAY HOUSES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I want to address another decision made by this government and return to the Solicitor General on the matter of shutting down Ontario's halfway houses.

Although the minister indicated yesterday that there would be a 90-day period in which those closures could take place, in fact, as we all know now, the closures started taking place last night. Men and women who were working on rebuilding their lives, making a transition out of jail and back into society, last night were sent back to jail.

I want to draw the minister's attention to the case of the Ellen Osler Home in Dundas, Ontario, a centre operated by the Salvation Army. Yesterday the 18 men who were living there were sent back to jail. They were given two hours' notice that they would be returning to jail. They were not allowed to make phone calls to family, to friends or to employers, because six of these men had jobs. They were working. They were starting to contribute again. Now they're back in jail.

We are hearing reports of that from across the province, reports of people who were working and who had to quit the jobs so that this minister could send them back to jail last night.

So, Minister, I ask you: How many of the people you shipped back to jail last night were working? How many people had to quit a job and go back to jail as a result of your so-called cost-saving measure?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that these are people who broke the laws of this country and the laws of this province. It's interesting to note her extended sympathy for those individuals.

I think it's important that we put this issue in perspective. On any given day we can have 75,000 offenders within the province of Ontario in a variety of methods of supervision. We have about 7,500 to 8,000 who are incarcerated. In this particular setting 398 beds in community resource centres represent about 0.5%.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. Would the member take his seat, please. If the members would like to hear the answer to the question I would appreciate kindness. Would the minister proceed.

Hon Mr Runciman: I was encouraging the Leader of the Opposition to put this in perspective, that 398 beds in community resource centres represent about 0.5% of the inmate population in this province. This is not a significant hardship for anyone.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, I'd not only like to hear the answer, I'd like to understand an answer. Perhaps, since you've asked me to address my questions through you, you can help me understand why this minister would respond to my question about how many people had to quit a job to go back to jail yesterday by telling me that they had committed a crime, or why he would give me a percentage of what that group of people was of those in our correctional institutions. I was asking how many people had to quit a job to go back to jail.

I will now ask the minister, because ironically this is the kind of cut that is undertaken that actually ends up costing more money than it saves, whether or not he has looked at what the increased cost of what he did yesterday is going to be. You forced people who were working to quit their jobs; you're sending them back to jail, where it actually costs more to keep people than it did in the halfway house.

According to the Elizabeth Fry Society, it costs approximately \$25,000 to keep a person in a halfway house. This is almost half of the \$47,000 that it costs, on average, to keep a person in jail. I see the minister is nodding his agreement. It's going to cost \$2.3 million just to buy the equipment for electronic monitoring if he brings that system in, and we haven't heard yet what the implementation cost will be.

Yesterday I asked you what the increased policing costs would be, how many more repeat offenders we would see, and you had no answers for me. It flies in the face of common sense to force people to quit jobs, to leave a halfway house, go back to jail—a more expensive facility—and claim it will save money.

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: What proof can you offer that closing these houses will save any money at all, or in fact can you offer that it will not cost more? I don't want rhetoric, I want a detailed accounting.

Hon Mr Runciman: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should talk to Premier Wells in Newfoundland. They've had this system in place for some time in terms of electronic monitoring. Perhaps she should turn around and talk to the member sitting behind her, a former minister of corrections.

The Liberal government, in 1989 to 1990, entered into a program of electronic monitoring. They entered into it. That was cancelled when the NDP took over government. So clearly there was strong support within the Liberal government of the day to move towards electronic monitoring. Now they're being critical of us following through on a program that they initiated.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): Beyond the question of whether you'll be saving any money and the fact that making people quit their jobs is pure lunacy, there is an issue of public safety here. What you've done by closing these houses is to remove the counselling and the support the offenders need to make that smooth and safe transition back into society. Your plan is to send those low-risk offenders on electronic bracelets, but since there are no halfway houses left, the high-risk offenders are going to have to fulfil their terms in jail and go directly back on to the street. And this system is supposed to be safer?

What is the basis of your statement that your misguided experiment will make our towns and cities safer, and what studies do you have to indicate that it's safer to take the high-risk offenders directly from jail and put them directly back on to our streets without any counselling, without any safety checks?

Hon Mr Runciman: I reject that assertion that we're going to be handling matters in that way. The fact of the matter is that anyone who is going out on to electronic monitoring, as I indicated yesterday, is going to have to comply with very strict guidelines in terms of the kinds of individuals we will put through the system, in terms of a risk assessment to go out on to the streets. We're going to ensure that they pose no risk to society.

What the member is talking about in terms of an offender who may pose a risk, we have to deal with them through the normal process in any event through the parole system. Perhaps the superintendent of the jail will make a decision in circumstances with respect to the extended temporary absence program as well. They are all going to be subjected to a very intensive risk assessment process.

I think what we are doing is in the best interests of public safety in this province. People who are going to be out there in the communities are going to be monitored on a 24-hour basis. Currently they simply reside in that residence. They're back out in the community. We have no indication really of what they're doing while they're out there. Now we're going to be monitoring them on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis; much safer for the public of Ontario.

1430

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, your introduction of new legislation today will bring an end to an unprecedented period of labour peace and economic growth, and in spite of the irresponsible predictions by both your party and the Liberals during the debate on Bill 40, we know that in 1993 and 1994 new private sector investment was at \$53.8 billion. In fact, in the manufacturing sector alone, which is a very highly unionized sector, we saw \$8.8 billion invested in 1994, which is the highest level of investment in any single year in the history of this province. All of that happened under the law of Bill 40. We know that since Bill 40 was enacted there's been a net increase of 178,000 jobs created in this province.

On page 15 of your Common Sense Revolution, you stated: "We will repeal the NDP's labour legislation—Bill 40—in its entirety. Period. It's a proven job killer." I'm asking you today, prove it.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): We are introducing today the repeal of Bill 40 and new amendments that are going to democratize the workplace. We are doing this because we know that we have had a tremendous loss of investment to this province and new job creation.

We have heard from the employers, and although you've indicated and said today there is this additional investment, there are these new jobs, unfortunately what you haven't told us is about the number of jobs, the thousands and thousands of jobs that did not happen here simply because people didn't expand in Ontario, didn't come in and didn't create new jobs. We will never know the thousands of jobs that have been lost because of Bill 40.

Mr Christopherson: The minister needs to realize that she's in government now and can't get away with just making wild allegations. You've got to prove what you're doing and why you're doing it and back up the things you say, and to suggest there were some thousands of jobs that didn't come here is not going to wash in the face of the record.

My second question is the same as the first. I'm asking the minister, in light of the investment that we've had in this province, in light of the fact that there was a GDP growth of 5.5%, that we have benefited from a stable work environment, that we have benefited from the labour peace that exists—and in fact we know that stability is one of the key factors when business is thinking of investing in a province—Minister, I ask you again: You made the statement in your document that this Bill 40 is a proven job killer; you didn't answer my question. Prove what you said in the Common Sense Revolution; prove it, Minister.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I will give you an example, and there are many, many other thousands of examples, and as the new jobs start to come into this province, when people realize the barriers to investment are down, we're going to have more examples.

In my own backyard, in the city of Kitchener, we know that Dare cookies cancelled a planned expansion because of the restrictions placed upon them by Bill 40, and they selected to move south to the United States. There are numerous other examples throughout this province. During the past few weeks I have received phone calls from employers asking if indeed we're going to repeal Bill 40, because if we are, they are prepared to expand their factories here, they are prepared to create new jobs, and I will tell you, the jobs will come.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, I still don't believe that you've proven it. However, let me take you up on your offer of examples. When the previous Minister of Labour was considering Bill 40, he travelled to 11 communities across the province, he met with 195 business and employer groups, 109 labour and union groups and 28 community organizations.

Minister, since your answer seems to be pointing out examples, I'm asking you today if you will commit to taking this legislation out in the province for public hearings and let's find out what the truth is. Will you commit to public hearings today?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm glad you mentioned the approach, the process used by the former Minister of Labour, because I would like to remind you—let's go back to what happened.

When the Minister of Labour decided there were 30 changes that he'd like to make to the Labour Relations Act, he got three people together from business, three people from labour, and he said, "These are the changes I'd like to make." In a month, labour said, "We have 60 changes we'd like to make," and business said, "We don't want to make any changes."

So what did your Minister of Labour do? He took the changes that had been put forward by the labour representatives and they became Bill 40. There was no input into the bill from the business community whatsoever. Yes, he travelled the province, but you and I both know that there was not one change in Bill 40 that reflected the wishes of the business community—not one.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question's been answered. The member for Windsor-Riverside.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): It's good to know that this government has two ministers for business.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I have a question that would go to the Premier, but I assume he will be referring it to the minister responsible for women's issues, so I will ask the question to the minister responsible for women's issues.

It follows on the question that was asked by the leader of the official opposition, and in the last answer the minister referred to the Conservatives' proposal for a Victims' Bill of Rights. That was outlined in your Blueprint for Justice and Community Safety in Ontario, which only came out in January of this year, so it's only a few months old.

In the Victims' Bill of Rights the second proposal says, and I quote, "Victims should have access to social services, health care and medical treatment, counselling and legal assistance responsive to their needs." With the cuts that you've announced today for support services with second-stage housing, what good is a Victims' Bill of Rights when you're ignoring it at this point when it's only been promised in a throne speech a week ago? What good is that promise? It's not worth the paper it's printed on.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, with responsibility for Women's Issues): In today's announcement we were referring to cuts in programs that did not affect the core necessary services for women who have been violated, who need shelters and second-stage housing. What we did take away were some counselling programs for women and their families that relate to psychological counselling,

opportunities for finding a new place to live, opportunities for discussing their concerns about child care, opportunities for returning to school, opportunities for getting a job, and all of those programs exist in communities across Ontario by other agencies, municipalities and small programs for women.

What we're saying, and other women are saying, including women who run shelters who came to us, is that there needs to be coordination among all of our agencies and that's what we intend to help them to accomplish.

Mr Cooke: The minister can talk about coordination all she wants. Every social service in this province is being cut. Services to kids, services to women, services to families, they're all being cut. You can't coordinate nothing when you're gutting all of the social services of this province.

This document that the Tories put out earlier this year, the Blueprint for Justice, also says, commenting on the amount of spending that we had for services to women:

"Decades of studies have established the need for more shelters for abused women and their children. It is long past time for government to dedicate the necessary resources to this problem, and to work with volunteer groups in design and construction. The issue of financial cost pales in comparison to the moral demand for action in this area."

What happened to the commitment of this party before it was in government now that it's in government? Where are all your commitments that you made just a few months ago to the women and children in this situation?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I would like to respond to the member to say that all responsible communities and agencies and boards and commissions are grouping together, like we are in London—my colleague the member for London Centre is part of that study in London—and we're all looking at ways that, during this downsizing—and, by the way, you use "cuts" like 2% is a major program cut. We're still spending over \$65 million on these programs. They were up to something like \$69 million or \$70 million. But we're spending vast amounts of money on these programs for women. It is still a priority of our government. The coordination program will be necessary in all communities across this province because we cannot bankrupt our province and then people will no longer have supports or jobs or hopes or aspirations for the future, and that's what this is all about.

1440

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): May I say to the minister, we are not talking about efficiencies. This is not what you are doing here. These are cuts to necessary services. The services that women and their children who have experienced violence need is not just a bed. You don't just put them there and say, "No help in terms of reintegration into the communities, into the workplace, and in finding long-term housing." Minister, I'm just astounded that you could stand there and say that.

If you look at your own document, you've said the issue of financial costs pales in comparison to the moral

demands. Your minister's letter out to these agencies doesn't talk about efficiencies. You know what it says? It says, "We're getting out of service areas we can simply no longer afford." I don't accept that these services can no longer be afforded in this province.

Let me say to the minister, you have a commitment to a tax break out there that is fuelling these funding cuts far beyond what is necessary in this province. People are being hurt. There are letters here: a letter from a mother talking about her child who wrote to the teacher about what they're experiencing in their flight from abuse and being in second-stage housing and saying, "We are finally free."

You're cutting their welfare benefits; you're cutting their support services. These women and children will no longer be free. These women and children are going to have to go back to situations of violence. You should be ashamed. Please explain to me how you're going to answer this mother, her son and many other families in the same situation.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Women and children will only be free when they have hope and confidence in the future. They do not have that now. They are worried about where they will get their next job. They are worried about whether they will be able to get the educational programs. We in this government heard that at every door we knocked on during the last campaign.

We have a mandate to provide the core, essential, necessary services. Counselling is one of them, and we are still spending over \$16 million in this program on counselling services alone. That's a lot of money, and I say to all of the members of this House that it is all of our responsibilities to find different ways of supporting women and children. Government cannot do it all. Persons have to accept responsibility for their family members and themselves if they want to have self-esteem and be successful.

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a—*Interjections*.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. Will the House come to order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Would the member please come to order.

Mr Bradley: I have a question for the Minister of Environment and Energy. Minister, do you intend to abolish the Niagara Escarpment Commission?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): Mr Speaker, as I rise to answer my first question in this House, may I wish you well, on behalf of my constituents in Guelph, in this unique forum.

Thank you for the question from the honourable member opposite. As with all ministries, given the severe financial restrictions that we are faced with, in my ministry we are looking at all boards, all commissions, all programs that we are involved in.

Mr Bradley: As I rise to ask my 7,000th question in the House, let me say—Mr Speaker, you of all people

would know this—that one of the proud legacies of the previous Progressive Conservative government was the establishment of the Niagara Escarpment itself and its protection and the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and in particular the present Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, the member for Carleton. It has been designated a biosphere, as we would know, by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

However, Mr Bill Murdoch, the member for Grey-Owen Sound, a well-known opponent of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, has said recently to the Owen Sound Sun Times that Ontario Environment minister Brenda Elliott has said to him, "I think you'll like what we're going to do with the commission."

Could you tell the members of this House and the people of Ontario, who expect you to protect the Niagara Escarpment, what it is that you intend to do that will be liked by the member for Grey-Owen Sound, who today, I believe, is squiring the Reform Party leader around his riding?

Hon Mrs Elliott: As in my working relationship with all the members of the caucus, what I was explaining to Mr Murdoch was that we are looking at delivering services efficiently from this ministry.

I can assure the member that the Niagara Escarpment Commission oversees the Niagara Escarpment, an internationally recognized feature of Ontario which we are committed to protect. This is a feature that is well recognized, that is highly admired by people across this province and throughout this world. Our government is committed to its protection.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health may or may not know that on August 25 his deputy minister indicated to some district health council folks that there would be a 10% cut to hospital transfers in October and another 10% in April. Then on September 8, the principal secretary to the Premier, Mr David Lindsay, indicated there would a 20% cut to hospitals. Then on September 11, an assistant deputy minister in the Ministry of Health indicated to chief financial officers of hospitals that they could expect a 20% cut as well.

Then yesterday, in response to a query from me, the minister said, "I have no idea where that would come from," these rumours of cuts, "and it certainly would not come from an assistant deputy minister or someone of the senior management team in my ministry."

Could I ask the minister why he's out of the loop, and would he—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I think the question's been asked.

Mr Laughren: Would he show us today that he's taking back control of his ministry from the bureaucrats by announcing that there will be no cuts in transfers to hospitals?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I appreciate the question. I think it's important to keep in perspective who's in the loop and who needs to be in the loop.

Speculation by an assistant deputy minister, which I understand took place in the form of what he claims to be a joke, an offhand remark—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Wilson: Believe me, with the very, very difficult agenda that your government left us I don't appreciate jokes like that, which add to instability in a system that we're trying to bring better management to. I have expressed my disappointment with that assistant deputy minister and I don't expect any member of the senior management team in my ministry to go down that road again in terms of speculation.

We are the government, we are the cabinet. I am the Minister of Health and I will deal with these issues. When I hear speculation like that, I will move very swiftly to try to bring stability back to, as your member for York South, the former Premier, spoke so eloquently about, a system that does need some restructuring, but it also needs the understanding and good management of the people in this House.

Mr Laughren: I appreciate that response from the Alexander Haig of the Tory party.

If the minister is at all concerned about instability or insecurity out there, and I think he should be, I would ask him to lay all of these rumours to rest, speak sharply to the principal secretary to the Premier, speak sharply to his deputy minister and his assistant deputy minister and announce here in the House today, once and for all—because, after all, he certainly promised this during the election—that he is not anticipating cuts of that magnitude to the Ontario hospital system.

Hon Mr Wilson: Perhaps the member would like to speak to the 11 chief executive officers of hospitals that I spoke to yesterday, who indicated very clearly to me—and their message was consistent with what we heard in the election campaign from the people of Ontario—that the status quo is not an option, that they want to restructure, they want to re-engineer, they're looking to government to help them through finding those efficiencies, bringing better management, helping them through their restructuring studies, and that's what we intend to do in my ministry. Where we can find efficiencies, where we can find better management, where we can avoid duplication, that's exactly what we'll be doing, and we'll be working in partnership with those people who must provide those services on the front line.

1450

FURNACE VENTING SYSTEMS

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. As I'm sure the minister is aware, the problem of high-temperature plastic vents on mid-efficiency furnaces is a big issue across the province. Some 11,000 Ontario homeowners are faced with the risk of exposure to carbon monoxide as the plastic vents on their heating systems are deteriorating and failing prematurely. This issue affects hundreds of homeowners in greater Barrhaven in my constituency, and families are concerned about the large replacement costs and the safety issue. Could the minister tell me

what his ministry and he himself are doing to address this problem to ensure that Ontario homeowners are safe throughout the winter months?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): This member and many other members in this Legislature have expressed concern over this particular matter. The premature failure of these plastic vents came to light in 1992. Under the previous government, a voluntary plan was set up to have homeowners try to remedy the particular situation. Of the 11,000 homeowners, only 400 took advantage of this plan, so it was evidently not successful.

When I took office in June of this year, I was very concerned about the safety of our citizens in the coming heating season and made this a very top priority of our ministry. On September 12, after mounting evidence, the director of my ministry's engineering and standards branch issued a safety order requiring the correction of heating systems by August 31 of next year. Following the issuance of this order—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Sterling: —8,000 homeowners became eligible under the Ontario new home warranty program, at no cost to the homeowner. The homeowners were advised to contact the Ontario new home warranty program for further details.

We are also providing all homeowners, other homeowners, with information on how to keep their system safe during this upcoming winter season.

Mr Baird: I appreciate the minister's comments. Could the minister tell this House what he and his ministry are doing to assist homeowners who have updated their heating system and are not covered by the new home warranty program? This is an issue for many homeowners in my constituency. I've a letter from one constituent on Langholm Crescent, and this is a very big issue. Could the minister tell what he's doing to protect health and safety?

Interjection: Call 1-800-NORM.

Hon Mr Sterling: I think some members across the way don't realize the importance and the severity of this issue. It is a very, very important issue to many people.

My primary concern is for the health and safety of these families, that carbon monoxide poison does not emit from these furnaces over the next year. Homeowners, until they are able to remedy their systems, can contact their gas company and they will obtain a free inspection. I also would advise homeowners to install a carbon monoxide detector. We have been advised that affected homeowners who are not covered by the home warranty program should contact their gas utility for information.

My ministry is committed to continue working with affected parties to try to find an alternative vent system that can reduce the cost to all players while promoting public safety. I have been advised, and this is good news for those people, that an alternative venting system is currently under way and we hope will be approved very shortly. I'll report back to the members when—

The Speaker: Order, please. The question has been answered.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Applause.

Ms Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Thank you. I'll enjoy that while it lasts.

My question is for the Minister of Health, and I hope he'll excuse that I haven't congratulated him on his appointment as hatchet man for health care in Ontario.

You are asking communities to come to you with reconfiguration proposals that will save health care dollars. In the Common Sense Revolution you guarantee a reinvestment of savings into any community that finds cost savings. Windsor is one of these communities. Will you today guarantee your commitment to the reconfiguration process in Windsor, where we've already gone through the painful process of reducing hospitals from four to two?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank the honourable member for her question. I welcome her to this Legislature and I do congratulate her on her election.

Very clearly, when I met with the Windsor-Essex district health council representatives, the representatives of the hospital restructuring in that area—I believe the honourable member will know it was about three or four weeks ago, perhaps a little longer—I suggested to them that they try to go back and bring forward a plan to me that would allow us to give them the green light to go ahead and finish the restructuring in that area.

There has been a tremendous amount of good work done in the Windsor-Essex area. Your people in that area are to be commended. I wish I could have given the green light some few weeks ago; however, the request for \$66 million of upfront capital, when the Ministry of Health in the best of years only spends about \$200 million on capital, didn't allow me at this time to give them the green light. They have come back with another proposal, which I'm currently reviewing, and I hope in the near future we'll be able to give the go-ahead to your constituents to get on with that restructuring.

Ms Pupatello: In fact the minister has stalled and sent the Windsor group back to the drawing-board. May I remind the minister that this is a landmark case in Windsor, with all eyes watching to see if you are committed to providing the incentives that communities need to work together and come back here with a plan for you. Perhaps I need to warn the hospitals that you're not prepared to play ball, or will you guarantee the \$66 million in capital, the \$22 million reinvested in our community for health services? We need the guarantee today. The province of Ontario needs the guarantee that our health services will be maintained.

Hon Mr Wilson: As gently as I can, the honourable member should know that Windsor is one of some 26 restructuring committees that will be reporting in the next weeks and months to the Ministry of Health, to this government and to their own district health councils. To give such a large portion this year of our capital dollars when we have to make some reinvestments in cancer care and we have to make some reinvestments for the waiting

list with respect to cardiac care in this province, to give all of that money to Windsor, which was a rather large carrot put forward by the previous government and done in isolation to the some 60 restructuring studies that are going on, 26 to come in pretty soon, I've had to ask for and I have received—and I think the honourable member is unfairly characterizing the very positive meeting I had with the representatives from her area—good cooperation, and I expect in the near future we'll be able to work something out so they can get on with their restructuring. That's my intent, and that's my commitment to you today.

1500

CLOSURE OF HALFWAY HOUSES

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): My question is to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. Mr Minister, in the throne speech your government stated, "The new government invites its partners in the broader public sector to identify the tools they will need to increase flexibility, improve efficiency, and reduce costs." Further on that same page, your government promised that it was "serious about reducing its own size and cost."

In the Ministry of Correctional Services, 80% of the funding goes to institutions which currently care for only 20% of those who've been convicted of crimes in this province—80% of those who've been convicted serve out their sentence within the community in one form or another. Yesterday, your ministry moved 400 additional prisoners from the community into already overcrowded government-run facilities.

I ask the Solicitor General, what consultation was held with the partners in the community about how to effect cost savings in correctional services and what suggestions came forward from community agencies, what consultations did he have about those suggestions, and what consultations have come forward from Correctional Services itself about changes that might happen effectively within correctional facilities run by the government?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): The consultative process is ongoing. The decision to close community resource centres is an initial change in terms of achieving some savings within the ministry of corrections. We're looking at the whole range of services and trying to identify core services that should be delivered by the Ministry of Correctional Services and focus our efforts on those core services. There's still a consultative process going on, an analysis of all the services we have provided over the past number of years and trying to identify the areas where really we should be focusing on in the future.

Mrs Boyd: That answer is not very satisfactory to those who have attempted with every means they have at their disposal to consult with this minister. I'm talking about people from the Elizabeth Fry Society, the John Howard Society, the Ontario Association of Community Correctional Residences, the Ontario Community Justice Association, the Salvation Army, the Saint Leonard's Society of Canada, who have done a report that does exactly what this government said it wanted its community partners to do, which they presented to the ministry in

September of this year, called Cost Reduction Strategies in Community Corrections: Proposals for the Province of Ontario.

Yet, although they have sent repeated requests to meet with the minister around these suggestions, as recently as September 27 this minister has refused to meet with these community representatives, has refused to consider the cost savings suggestions in their proposals and instead has cut them.

I repeat to the minister, how are community agencies supposed to believe this nonsense that your government is stating about wanting to consult with partners? You eliminate your partners instead of consulting with them.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question's been asked.

Mrs Boyd: What is your plan in the next few weeks to meet with these groups and consult with them about the reality of their situation and that of their employees and that of the people they serve?

Hon Mr Runciman: We intend to consult widely—we're not trying to reject the input from any interested group in the province of Ontario—and we will indeed do that. What we've done in this particular situation, as I indicated in my response to the leader of the official opposition, is deal with a very modest number of individuals—398 beds. We have not put all of those people back into institutions, as the member alleged in her initial question.

It's interesting to note her concern for cost savings now, and new ideas and proposals that we should be listening to, when you look at yesterday's media, "NDP Staff Got \$6.1 Million Sendoff." That's the NDP's idea of good utilization of tax dollars, not ours.

RURAL PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Mr Speaker, first may I extend my congratulations to you on your election as Speaker of the House. I, for one, certainly look forward to working with you during the coming term.

My question is addressed to the Minister of Health. Rural Ontario is having great difficulty in maintaining adequate numbers of physicians. Over the past few years, the climate to practise medicine in Ontario has not been healthy, and this seems to have reduced the number of physicians going to our rural areas. However, in some instances doctors are prepared to move into rural areas but are unable to, as your ministry will not provide them with an OHIP billing number.

The Campbellford and Brighton areas in the riding of Northumberland desperately need physicians. Will you help these communities?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank my colleague, the honourable member for Northumberland, for what is a very serious question.

I recall, as Health critic, watching the numbers grow in this issue area. We used to criticize the previous government early in its mandate for some 50 communities where there weren't enough physicians, therefore resulting in reduced emergency room hours in the local hospital or closed emergency rooms on weekends and during the evenings. When this government came to

office, we discovered there are about 76 communities. Campbellford and Brighton are probably becoming the most famous, and they really illustrate why we need to act, and act very quickly, with respect to this issue and why the old programs, the status quo programs, are not working in terms of our underserviced area program, when we have programs, we have some generous incentives in place, we have some mechanisms through Bill 50 to deal with these issues, but even with all that we're still seeing an increase in areas that are not receiving proper coverage.

I'm working very, very hard right now, very quickly, with the Ontario Medical Association to address this problem. I'm hopeful that with the help of things like the Graham Scott report and some reinvestment activity that we are planning, we'll be able to bring some solutions forward in the very near future.

Mr Galt: There's no question the health system in Ontario is in great need of assistance in terms of helping communities recruit physicians. I would ask the Honourable Jim Wilson if he has any further plans to assist areas such as Campbellford and Brighton to obtain the required physicians and once again provide health equity in rural Ontario.

Hon Mr Wilson: If you think of the situation of Brighton—and I've seen through media reports that that town, in its quest to try to attract just one physician, is offering upwards of \$60,000 or \$65,000 worth of additional incentives above what we pay for in the fee-forservice pool out of OHIP. This isn't just a money issue; it's a whole range of issues.

I'm pleased to report, and this actually came to my attention just this morning, that the Ontario Medical Association has released a press release to its members, dated October 2, in which they outline the very positive and constructive discussions we're currently having. They also, to my delight, indicate that they've received the message from this government that they're expected within a very few weeks—in fact, they say within a month—to get together with us and actually put forward solutions.

We'll be reporting back to the cabinet and to the people of this House with what I hope will be some very positive solutions—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question has been answered. Will the member take his seat, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: —that physicians and the government can jointly implement.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. It has now become clear that the minister, as part of the government's relentless cost-cutting measures, is planning to downgrade winter road maintenance in northern Ontario and in fact throughout the province. Such a move is courting disaster in northern Ontario, further endangering the lives of many people who must use the highway every day to go to home and to work.

While I recognize that the minister has no understanding of the realities of winter road conditions in the north,

I cannot believe that he is willing to risk the lives of the people in the north by allowing this downgrade to happen.

1510

My question to the minister is, will he take the opportunity now to assure the House that he will not make such cost-cutting decisions that will imperil lives, and will he commit to maintaining road maintenance at its previous level?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I would like to thank the member and, at the same time, I would like to assure the member that public safety is our highest priority. The Ministry of Transportation will continue to clear the highways as soon as possible and maintain the standards that are safely adequate.

Mr Gravelle: It is imperative that the minister understand that any decision to downgrade winter road maintenance will cost lives. Surely this government cannot justify its cost-cutting exercise at such a price. I implore the minister and ask him to confirm that any decisions made or to be made in this regard will be rescinded immediately so the people of this province can at least be guaranteed a relatively safe passage on the roads and highways throughout the winter months.

Hon Mr Palladini: We believe that our standards are comparable to many, many other provinces in Canada and we are going to maintain those standards. This government is going to do better for less. I would like to assure the honourable member that safety on our highways is a priority in maintaining clean highways. This government is going to be able to do that. We will monitor road conditions and make the changes necessary as we go along, but we are committed to maintaining our highways.

PETITIONS HOMOLKA CASE

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): I present to the House a petition containing hundreds of names requesting a public inquiry with regard to an investigation into the incarceration arrangements of Karla Homolka.

QUEEN STREET MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition to the assembly and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the new Conservative government is hellbent," it says here, "on establishing a 20-bed forensic facility for the criminally insane at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre; and

"Whereas the nearby community is already home to the highest number of ex-psychiatric patients and social service organizations in hundreds of licensed and unlicensed rooming houses, group homes and crisis care facilities in all of Canada; and

"Whereas there are other neighbourhoods where the criminally insane could be assessed and treated; and

"Whereas no one was consulted—not the local residents and business community, not leaders of community organizations, not education and child care providers and not even local members of Parliament;

"We, the undersigned residents and business owners of our community, urge the new Progressive Conservative government of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to accommodate the criminally insane in an expanded Queen Street Mental Health Centre until a public consultation process is completed."

I have signed my signature to this petition.

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a similar petition to the one presented by the Conservative member opposite. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, demand that the Karla Homolka plea bargain be revoked by the Attorney General of Ontario, the Honourable Charles Harnick."

It is signed by a large number of people from the Niagara Peninsula.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I have a petition signed by me and it's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario against economic cuts to present rates of social assistance.

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, strongly oppose the government of Ontario's plans to cut welfare rates by 21.6%."

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LABOUR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT. 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL ET L'EMPLOI

Mrs Witmer moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations / Projet de loi 7, Loi visant à rétablir l'équilibre et la stabilité dans les relations de travail et à promouvoir la prospérité économique et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois en ce qui concerne les relations de travail.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1516 to 1521.

The Speaker: The members will please rise one at a time when the clerk calls them.

Arnott, Ted Baird, John R. Barrett, Toby Bassett, Isabel Beaubien, Marcel Boushy, Dave Brown, Jim Carr, Gary

Carroll, Jack

Ayes Guzzo, Garry J. Hardeman, Ernie Harris, Michael D. Hodgson, Chris Hudak, Tim Jackson, Cameron Johns, Helen Johnson, Bert

Johnson, Dave

Preston, Peter Rollins, E.J. Douglas Ross, Lillian Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Saunderson, William Shea, Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Skarica, Toni

Chudleigh, Ted Clement, Tony Cunningham, Dianne Danford, Harry DeFaria, Carl Doyle, Ed Ecker, Janet Elliott, Brenda Eves, Ernie L. Fisher, Barb Flaherty, Jim Ford, Douglas B. Fox, Gary Froese, Tom Galt, Doug Gilchrist, Steve Grimmett, Bill

Johnson, Ron Jordan, Leo Kells, Morley Klees, Frank F. Leach, Al Leadston, Gary L. Marland, Margaret Martiniuk, Gerry Maves, Bart Munro, Julia Mushinski, Marilyn Newman, Dan O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Palladini, Al Parker, John L. Pettit, Trevor

Smith, Bruce Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Sterling, Norman W. Stewart, R. Gary Stockwell, Chris Tascona, Joseph N. Tilson, David Turnbull, David Vankoughnet, Bill Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wilson, Jim Witmer, Elizabeth Wood, Bob Young, Terence H.

The Speaker: All those opposed, rise one at a time.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic Bartolucci, Rick Bisson, Gilles Boyd, Marion Bradley, James J. Brown, Michael A. Castrilli, Annamarie Christopherson, David Cleary, John C. Colle, Mike Conway, Sean G. Cooke, David S. Curling, Alvin

Duncan, Dwight Gerretsen, John Grandmaître, Bernard Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Kormos, Peter Lalonde, Jean-Marc Lankin, Frances Laughren, Floyd Marchese, Rosario Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony McLeod, Lvn

Miclash, Frank Morin, Gilles E. Patten, Richard Phillips, Gerry Pouliot, Gilles Pupatello, Sandra Ramsay, David Ruprecht, Tony Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony Wildman, Bud Wood, Len

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 77, the nays 38.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Mr Speaker, as I begin my contribution to the debate on the speech from the throne, I want, as other members have done, to extend to you my personal congratulations on your elevation to the Speaker's chair and I look forward to your tenure in that high office. We've served a good deal of time here together and I look forward to working with you in this new role that you're taking on.

I've participated in a number of throne debates over the years and I've always attempted to look at the approach of the government as outlined in its throne speech as a way of trying to determine what the general approach is of the government, recognizing that the specifics for implementing its direction will come later, as we've seen with the legislation introduced today, unfortunately, and the budget that's coming down later. We will be able to determine what the specifics will be.

I've looked at the throne speech. It's pretty obvious, as the Lieutenant Governor said in his presentation to the assembly, that this government is indeed committed to its document that it had published prior to the last election and campaigned on during the election campaign.

1530

There really weren't many surprises in the throne speech, but I am disappointed that we have this single-minded approach, which I think can best be described in a very short phrase. Essentially, what this government campaigned on and what it seems to believe fervently is that the rich in Ontario don't have enough money and the poor have too much. It's essentially that rather strange dichotomy that poor people have too much money, they are taking too much, and that the wealthy do not have enough. That's a very odd and strange analysis of our economy as it stands today.

The government has announced, and we've seen, a significant cut in social assistance. I ask any member in this Legislature, how can we seriously expect people to take a 21% or 22% cut in their incomes and be able to continue to provide the essentials of shelter, food and clothing for their families?

We've seen the performance of the new Minister of Community and Social Services in the Legislature, and he's, to say the least, presenting rather bizarre solutions for the problems facing these people. He seems to have the view that these people, who have now had two or three months to prepare, as he says, should all now be working, and if they had really been serious, they'd all be out now working in the workforce and they wouldn't then face a serious cut in income. Frankly, it seems to me that if it was that easy to obtain employment, a very significant number of those people who are collecting social assistance would not be collecting it in the first place.

I suppose there are many in the government benches who believe that most, if not all, of the people who collect social assistance in this province are just people who do not want to work, and so if you provide a disincentive, you may change that behaviour and they will get out and get jobs. Perhaps we could concede that there may be a number of people who do not wish to work, but to suggest that the majority or even a sizeable minority of the people who collect social assistance are people who do not wish to work is a complete misreading of the situation.

Particularly when you see the government's lack of commitment to good child care, it means that most single parents are not going to be able to provide for care for their children without staying at home themselves, and as a result, they won't be able to get out to work. Even when you analyse the throne speech, you can see the basic contradictions within that proposal.

No wonder the minister has had such a difficult time explaining to this assembly and to the public how people are supposed to cope. In some ways I feel a little sorry for the minister. I mean, this is a difficult role to play.

I had hoped at one point that perhaps he would learn as he became more familiar with his ministry and with

the regulations and the legislation for which he is responsible, that he might alter his position, and it sounded as if he was going to do that. At one point he said he had learned a lot about the problems facing people on social assistance and therefore he was concerned about how the government's agenda might impact upon those people. But then very quickly he moved back to the original position of the government.

I suspect the Premier had a little talk with him and told him: "Look, this is the agenda. We don't want you to be making these kinds of sympathetic statements to the public." Perhaps he should have had a little further talk and given him some ideas about what he should be saying, because what he's been saying since hasn't made a great deal of sense.

The thing that is particularly galling and which fits with what I said about the approach of the government is that we all know this is fiscally driven by a commitment to a major tax cut in the province, again the view that we should take money from the poor people and we should return it to the wealthy. In other words, we have the poor with less and the wealthy with more, and the suggestion is that somehow this is going to produce many jobs in the province.

Frankly, their numbers don't add up now. They didn't add up when the Common Sense Revolution document, or what I call the No Sense Retribution document, was brought in. At the time, the government, the now government, the then opposition party, said that by cutting government programs by \$6 billion, we could then in fact have a lower deficit, certainly, but we also would have a 30% tax rate cut. At the same time the government was committed, and the Premier, the now Premier, repeatedly said the government would be committed to protecting health care, classroom education, policing and, depending on what part of the province he was in, he also added in agriculture.

Frankly, those numbers never did add up—it's impossible—and it's been shown that the government now recognizes that, so the Premier is now talking about a \$9-billion cut instead of \$6 billion, 150% of what was proposed initially, and of course that means continuing cuts over three years. All of this because of a commitment for a tax break to upper-income Ontarians, to give more money to those who already have and to take more money away from those who don't.

The commitment means that those who rely on public services will bear the greatest loss and receive the lowest tax benefit, if they pay any taxes now, and those who have the most and rely the least on public services will receive the greatest tax benefit.

It is completely unacceptable to us in this party to finance this tax break on the backs of the poor to fulfil what is essentially giving more to the rich, taking more from the poor, simply because of an ideological view that the rich do not have enough money and the poor have too much.

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I rise today to speak in support of the speech from the throne, which set out in very precise terms the priorities which this government will address.

First permit me to elaborate a little on the great riding of Chatham-Kent. Geographically my riding includes the city of Chatham, the Maple City, with approximately 43,000 people, and all of Kent county north of the Thames River except for the village of Thamesville. Included in Kent county is the great industrial town of Wallaceburg. I refer to Wallaceburg as a great industrial town because with a population of only 12,000 people, it has 5,000 industrial jobs, thanks in large part to a program called the Wallaceburg skills development program.

This program started 17 years ago as a cooperative training venture between local industry, labour, St Clair College and the board of education. It is a remarkable example of a local initiative that worked, but one that is currently in jeopardy because of the bureaucratic nightmare called OTAB, the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board.

Also included in the riding is the town of Dresden, home of Uncle Tom's Cabin and Museum, a major attraction on the black heritage tour, and a Nabisco food processing plant that cans 50% of the Canadian volume of whole tomatoes. Those tomatoes, along with major quantities of corn and soybeans, are the primary crops grown on some of the finest farm land in Canada by some of the greatest farmers in Canada.

1540

We are proud to boast that Union Gas maintains its head office in Chatham and we hope in the near future to see construction begin on Canada's largest ethanol plant. With natural gas and ethanol, Kent county will become increasingly important as the alternative fuel capital of Canada.

Navistar International Corp, which produces heavyduty International trucks, is our largest employer. They are currently producing 103 trucks a day, most of which are exported to the United States.

I am also pleased to report that Chatham has been selected as the host city for the 1996 Special Olympics provincial summer games.

During the 35th Parliament recently completed, the Chatham-Kent riding was served by Mr Randy Hope of the NDP. I want to acknowledge Randy's effort on behalf of the people of Chatham-Kent. While I seldom agreed with him on policy matters or on his government's decisions, I do thank him for his years of service. I am proud now to carry the Conservative banner following in the footsteps of Andy Watson, the Honourable Darcy McKeough and the great George Parry.

I would like at this time to acknowledge my wife, Janette, who has always encouraged me to follow my dreams. I couldn't be here without her total support.

As I became less active in my business career, I was faced with the option of complaining about government or offering to make myself available to help. I considered my three children and my grandchildren, and I realized that government as we knew it in Ontario was unsustainable. Quite frankly, I was embarrassed to say to my children, "Here, we broke it; you go fix it."

We have allowed government to grow out of control—and that is the collective "we." Most of us here com-

plained as our taxes continued a relentless upward spiral. We have also complained about the oppressive government regulations and the runaway debt levels, and at the same time we watched as hundreds of special-interest groups hijacked our province.

Like so many of my colleagues, I finally had enough. It was time to get involved, to bring some sense of order to this monster government that we have allowed to become the master rather than the server it was intended to be.

The platform we took to the people is practical and doable. It causes us to address the problems today rather than continue to run up unpayable balances on our children's credit cards.

The people used the democratic process to send a message that they wanted the program we proposed. I stand here before you today to let the people of Chatham-Kent know that I am totally committed to doing everything I can to make sure we deliver. I feel so strongly about the need to rescue our province that my written promise during the campaign stated that, "As a member of a Mike Harris majority government, if we haven't lowered your taxes and balanced the total budget within five years or less, I will resign." I believe it's time politicians were more accountable for their actions.

In my nomination speech, I told the people of Chatham that I believed in God, in the family as the basis for order in our society, in the sanctity of human life, and in the need for all citizens to be more self-reliant and less dependent on government.

Today I stand in this great chamber believing in the same fundamentals, with the added belief that in order to restore credibility to government, we must deliver on our promises. What an incredibly exciting time to be alive and part of the process in Ontario. We have an opportunity, indeed a responsibility, to redraw the blueprint which will take our great province into the next millennium.

While part of my responsibilities relates to being a member of the Mike Harris team, of greater importance is my commitment to my constituents to stimulate economic development in Kent county, economic development by the private sector that creates permanent, well-paid jobs. Our government does understand its role as the facilitator of job creation, not the job creator.

Like so many others here, I come from an ordinary, hardworking family. I believe on June 8, the ordinary, hardworking families of this province, the silent majority, stood up and got counted. They asked us to restore fiscal integrity to the province so that they and their children would have a future. We must not let them down.

When my time of service is done here, I would like it to be said that the government I am so proud to be a part of made the difficult decisions, despite vociferous opposition by special-interest groups, that made Ontario a more exciting, compassionate place for all of us and that I was able to make a contribution to that process.

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): It is with some pleasure that I rise to respond to the speech from the throne. I'd like first of all to take the opportunity to thank the people of Downsview for their faith in me. I

have been elected to represent one of the most exciting ridings in Ontario. It is the home of people whose origins go back to some 115 countries and who speak a total of about 84 different languages.

A microcosm of the new Canada, Downsview is an exemplary community where diverse economic, racial and cultural groups flourish side by side. It is a community that prizes excellence in education through such dynamic institutions as York University and Osgoode Hall Law School. It is a community that values the importance of work and industry through such leaders as Labourers' International and Bombardier of Canada. It is a community that cares deeply about the importance of family and the safety of its seniors, its women and its children. It is a community that speaks to the future of Canada and that has much to teach this province and this country.

Yet as conscious as I am of the strength of the riding which I represent, I am equally aware of the challenges which we will have to face. Ask just about anyone in Downsview about sacrifice and they will tell you that they are accustomed to making do, that they work hard every day to create a better life for themselves and for their children, that they resent those who do not share these values and who abuse their privileges as residents of what the United Nations has termed one of the best countries in which to live. But no one in Downsview would ever want another human being to go hungry, to be homeless, to have children suffer, and that is what this government has announced loudly and boldly through its speech from the throne.

One of the fundamental characteristics of a fair society is how it treats, not its strong, but its weakest members. Governments must ever be wary of using their extraordinary powers against those least able to defend themselves. How can the poor, the elderly, the children, ever defend themselves against the massive and well-entrenched machinery of any government? What kind of society will we be if we willingly ignore and discard the neediest among us? Would we or could we in our families ever abandon our parents, our children, our daughters, our sons?

1550

Canada has gained the respect of the world because of its traditions, its peacekeeping, and its promise of equality of opportunity for its citizens. Throughout our history, no province has exemplified that equality more than Ontario. While our system has not been and is not now perfect, it has nevertheless offered some important guarantees. Through education, through health care and through child care, Ontario has provided effective tools for a healthy and productive citizenry.

All this, and more, is now in jeopardy. Recent pronouncements of this government leave no doubt that draconian measures will be the order of the day. In the name of fiscal restraint, it is launching an attack on schools, hospitals, day cares, workers, students and the disabled, among so many others. Anyone who disagrees with it is labelled a special-interest group. This is not fiscal restraint, this is an ideological war.

We all know that the problems to be resolved are many and complex and that unpopular measures must

sometimes be taken. It may be that a revolution is required for change to take place, but it is also true that successful revolutions are born of ideas and not just from the brute force of power. The Common Sense Revolution of which the government is so proud brings no new ideas, and there is nothing more dangerous than power without the conviction of new ideas. And so some twisted form of common sense is peddled as the magic solution to all of our ills.

The words of one politician in particular ring true: "We had also taken apprenticeship in advertising and learned how to put a complex and sophisticated case in direct, clear and simple language. We had, finally, been arguing that case for the best part of four years, so our agenda would, with luck, strike people as familiar common sense rather than as a wild, radical project."

This is what this government is doing, but the quote is not new. It belongs to Margaret Thatcher. She too, like this government, tried to play with the common sense of ordinary citizens, and we all know how disastrous that was for England: high unemployment and even higher deficits.

Not even the notion of revolution is new. It was announced in Chicago during the 1980 Republican convention, which for the first time preached the political theory of supply-side economics that hinged economic revival to reduced taxes and services. We are now being sold a Reaganomics bill of goods all over again, and we know how disastrous that was for the United States. Americans were left with the highest deficits in their history.

Another politician has said, "We have to recognize that litigation, taxation, regulation, welfare, education, the very structure of government, the structure of health, all those things, have to be re-examined from the standpoint of what will make us the most competitive society."

That is what the Tories are preaching. People are forgotten as everything is sacrificed on the altar of competitiveness. But these words belong not to Mike Harris but to an American Republican, none other than Newt Gingrich. After Thatcher's common sense and the Reaganomics of 15 years ago, we now see the Tories again with the Gingrich revolution. I might well imagine what the outcome may be in the United States, but I care more about the future of this province, a future which is in jeopardy because of failed ideas that are now being peddled as a revolution of the 1990s.

This does not, however, mean that governments should deal with our considerable challenges by spending our way through them or by denying them. It does mean that when we are asked to do our best for our province by tightening our belts, this apply to every one of us. Instead, this government has focused on requiring seniors, people with disabilities and single mothers to cut back. It would close hospitals and put higher education out of the reach of many families, yet it asks nothing of big business.

While the Toronto-Dominion Centre successfully appeals its property tax assessment that could result in a \$10-million refund, Wheel-Trans is being dismantled. While corporations like the Royal Bank and Great Lakes

Power boast record net profits and profit margins respectively, thousands of health care workers fear for their jobs. Where's the belt tightening? Where is the justice in this? I'm sure that even business leaders must be shaking their heads in shock.

The Conservative agenda seems bent on inflicting further punishment on people who have already paid for a crushing recession that has left them without jobs.

As difficult as the consequences of this recession have been, what worries me more is the attitude of a government that believes that being without a job is somehow the fault of the jobless. It worries me because the recession may have taken away their jobs but this government seeks as well to take away people's dignity. This is not what Ontarians believe is fair, and it is most certainly not the legacy of even past Conservative governments in Ontario. John Robarts's and Bill Davis's Ontario did not accept that some of the population should be well fed while the remainder starves. Never in the history of Ontario have we seen such blatant attempts to pursue ideology at the expense of people.

Deficit cutting and balanced budgets no longer mean what the words indicate. They are now code words, code words well understood by a select few, code words intended to redistribute wealth to the rich. All the devastating, demoralizing cuts that have already been announced this year will barely be able to finance next year's income tax reduction, which will most benefit the province's highest income earners.

But Ontarians will not be fooled. Ours is a people that has weathered numerous crises, and we will survive the Conservative agenda as well. To the people of Ontario, we in the Liberal caucus continue to pledge that we will speak out: for fairness, for justice and above all for people.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): First, Mr Speaker, so as not to appear ungracious, I should congratulate everybody, you included. And now I'll stop puckering up and approaching from the rear and get on with a discussion of the throne speech.

The fact is that the omissions from the throne speech were what was most telling to the folks from Welland-Thorold and Niagara region, because Niagara region, a unique part of this province which is a remarkable integration of agricultural, urban, rural and industrial communities, has been among the hardest hit of all of Ontario when it came to the impact of free trade and the recession. The impact of free trade and the recession created levels of unemployment in Niagara that are unprecedented for Niagara and certainly among the highest in the province of Ontario.

There's no doubt about it: A whole lot of people in Niagara region—no two ways about it—voted for Tories. They voted for Tories because a whole lot of them were inclined to believe the blue book promise about jobs, 725,000 of them, and my God, they were shocked like they've never been shocked. They have a sense of betrayal, and by God, people were stopping me on the street, saying, "There must be liars within that gang because"—I didn't say that, Speaker, but people were stopping me on the street saying that.

When they listened to the throne speech, not once but twice, some called the 1-800-FOOLED YA line, and others asked me if in the throne speech there was not a single mention of jobs, never mind 725,000, never mind 725—not one.

We've got people in Niagara region who are hurting. Those same people, not just young people, but their parents and more mature people yet, who believed that they had some security in the workplace, who expected to be able to work, work hard, work in a very skilled way—because Niagara region's workers are as skilled as any in this province, in this country—found themselves after 10, 15, 20 years' investment in that workplace unemployed, without a job because of free trade and the recession.

They found themselves abandoned by a federal Liberal government that too had made promises in its red book about jobs and about sustenance and support for those hard hit, hardest hit, by the recession and by free trade. What did they discover? They discovered that there were UI cutbacks, so they were forced to go knocking at the door of the welfare office because they were unemployed and they had no support from a UI system that they hoped, albeit fecklessly, would carry them through a brief period of unemployment, and they find themselves on welfare. Now they find themselves under attack as unemployed people, because not only is there not any effort, any suggestion of job creation in that throne speech, there is a commitment to an unprecedented attack on the poorest and the weakest and their children.

1600

I know you spend time in your constituency office, Speaker, and I know these people have been in talking to you, and they're not just angry and they don't just feel betrayed, but they're afraid. I know you know it. These people have had their futures stolen from them by a government that doesn't give a tinker's dam about working women and men, about the weak, about the sick, about the aged and the seniors.

I know there were people who criticized this government for being ideological. I have no quarrel with being ideological, because I'm inclined to be somewhat ideological myself. But there is something wrong with being dishonest, and if the Tory agenda is an ideology of Bay Street they should say it. Indeed, this government is so deep in the back pockets of Bay Street that it's spitting out lint. That's an old one, but it was true before and it's true now.

I understand that not everybody in Welland-Thorold voted for me. I know that. There are some people in Welland-Thorold that I don't want to vote for me, because I have no intention of representing the interests of the powerful corporations, none whatsoever. I recognize that the interests of a shop floor worker are far different from the interests of the owners of that factory.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Plus there are more, so it's more votes.

Mr Kormos: Yes, and my community is a community of working people. Welland and Thorold are hardworking people, most of them immigrants, most of them

coming to the communities of Welland and Thorold to work in the steel plants and the pipe plants and in the paper mills of Thorold, and they're creative people, far more creative than this government has been in its somewhat unimaginative, to say the least, and most especially uncreative—because it isn't a throne speech about creation, it isn't a throne speech about vision. It's a throne speech about abandonment and an attack, and it's a throne speech about payola, grease, kickbacks, for the wealthiest and the big corporations.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): Oh, you're so deep in the unions' pocket we call that an enema.

Mr Kormos: I have no quarrel—

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): The member for Etobicoke West, you're not in your seat.

Mr Kormos: Speaker, Mr Stockwell will never be in his seat even when he's sitting in his seat. Mr Stockwell has no seat. Haven't you been listening to the Premier and reading the news reports? But that's okay, because I've been there, done that. The only thing left—and I do have some photographers at the Sun with whom I have close contact; we could always introduce Stockwell to one of them. But he's nowhere near as eligible as I am.

Let me say this, because this brings to mind an important point: This government, because of its size, because of its enormity—there are no two ways about it; this government is so large in numbers that they're sitting on the opposition side. This is sort of the gulag, the Tory gulag. If you're not in the mainstream, if you're not circled around the Premier and his yes-men—and trust me, in this government it's yes-men only—

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): And yes-women too.

Mr Kormos: Not a whole lot—then you're on the fringe, you're marginalized.

Over the course of several years now, I have learned a few things here. One of the things I've learned is that if the voters don't like anything, they surely don't like seeing their parliamentarians, their politicians, their representatives, in this assembly or the federal assembly, standing there, sitting there, performing like trained seals, singing from the hymn-book as required, reading the scripted speeches, most of them not very good to begin with, prepared by ministries, asking those oh-so-stupid questions that you ask when you're a government backbencher and the ministry writes you a question. Sometimes, just for fun, they should reverse the process, you know—remember Kreskin?—do the answer, because that's printed on their sheet too, and let the minister pose the question.

I'm going to say something to some of the back-benchers here. Sycophancy has got more than a toehold in this government in the three short months since it's come into power. I'm going to say this: Niagara region has high expectations from all of its six representatives in this Legislature. Niagara region dearly needs jobs. Notwithstanding my own personal views about the effectiveness of casinos and their impact on communities, the Niagara region is prepared to accept into the community of Niagara Falls a casino and the hundreds, indeed thousands of jobs that would create in short order,

and because of the efforts of CAW down in Windsor, now good-paying jobs.

I prevail upon the government backbenchers to not just be trained seals, to be more than just a choir or a chorus, to indeed speak up, stand up, speak out. And if that means speaking out against stupid policies that come from the Premier's office, stand up and speak out against them, because your constituents will recognize you and respect you all the more for it. That's the challenge.

I'm afraid that this chorus, though, this choir, is going to read from that blue book until every institution that we hold dear in this province is stolen from us, and they will have left behind them a wake of destruction—no creation, no institutions, no creativity, no vision. That's my fear.

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): It's an honour to be standing here today representing the riding of Norfolk. I was born and raised on our family farm north of Port Dover on Lake Erie, and my family has a history in the area going back 200 years. I feel I've gained an appreciation for the hard work of many generations that has built proud communities throughout Norfolk.

The riding of Norfolk is home to 77,000 people. It extends from Lake Erie, in fact from the international boundary, north to Brant county, west to Elgin and Oxford and east to Haldimand. Agriculture remains an extremely important sector of the economy and has been balanced recently with growth in manufacturing and heavy industry.

I wish to recognize the previous work done for the riding of Norfolk by MPP Norman Jamison and MPP Gordon Miller. I continue to work with Mr Jamison, and just recently, last night actually, was speaking with Mr Miller. Before Mr Miller, James N. Allan represented our riding for 24 years and was Treasurer of Ontario. In the 1920s our riding was represented by John S. Martin, at the time Minister of Agriculture.

Before I delve into the political landscape I would like to address the voters of Norfolk to extend a very special thank you to many people in the riding who supported my campaign and provided me with guidance on so many issues.

This throne speech is about change. It truly is time for fresh horses. It's time for positive change to restore confidence in this province and prepare Ontarians to lead Canada into the 21st century. However, we cannot lead the change without a massive restructuring in our government and our finances.

1610

My riding of Norfolk is in the grip of a political revolution. A new brand of populism has taken hold that rejects the notion that voters can be bribed with their own money. It used to be, and George Bernard Shaw said this, that a government that robs Peter to pay Paul can certainly depend on the support of Paul. Peter knows the money's run out and even Paul realizes the easy money days are over. We have a problem in Ontario. It's called the debt. It's approaching \$100 billion. In the past 10 years, our debt has almost tripled. Add to this the Ontario Hydro debt and the unfunded liability of the Workers' Compensation Board.

We need a wakeup call in Ontario. We have the worst annual deficit in Canada compared to the size of our economy, projected to reach \$10.6 billion this year if left unchecked.

This year we will pay out almost \$9 billion in interest cost, a figure that has more than doubled in the last five years. More than 18 cents of every dollar in revenue now goes to pay off this interest. What that means to the average taxpayer in Ontario: The person is handing over almost \$800 every year from his or her pocket to pay the interest on past government deficits. How long can we afford this? The answer is, we can't afford this kind of spending, and we never could. Ontario government spending has doubled in the last 10 years.

Ontario is among the highest-taxed jurisdictions in North America and there have been 65 tax increases in the past decade. I ask you to picture yourself in a speeding car. We're about to hit the death-and-tax wall. We have no seatbelts, no air bags, no anti-lock brakes. Take a look in the back seat. Your children are riding with you.

We have a financial problem in Ontario. We have a taxation problem, a borrowing problem and a spending problem, but the money has run out. The fiscal tooth fairy is dead, and so's the fairy godmother.

Our provincial and federal politicians and bureaucrats, in my view, have behaved very similar to drug addicts. I would call them tax-and-spend addicts. They are addicted to taxing and borrowing and spending. Through my previous work, I know a bit about addiction. We must seek new ways to kick the habit. There ought to be a law against it, and taxpayers need statutory protection from this type of behaviour.

You know, taxes don't work if they're not collected. You don't have to live in Delhi or Tillsonburg, down in tobacco country, to know about the tobacco tax revolt and the problem with smuggling and the underground production and sale of cigarettes. Smokers won their battle against the taxman, at least for now. These are honest, hardworking people who simply want to enjoy some of life's pleasures without government breathing down their neck and reaching into their pockets.

I've been knocking on doors since January 6 of this year in towns like Selkirk and Simcoe and Port Dover and Port Rowan. People want jobs, not tax-and-spend binges. People don't need more reasons to join the underground economy.

We now have a government with the courage to say no. We will reform government. We will follow the example of Ralph Klein, Roy Romanow in Saskatchewan, Frank McKenna and other premiers who have cut government taxing and spending. When we lower provincial income tax rates by 30% over the next three years, the average family in my riding, earning on average \$48,000 a year, will save \$4,000. That's \$4,000 that stays within the family and within the community, not for a politician or some bureaucrat to spend here at Queen's Park.

Here's a list of what people in my riding want: First of all, major change; secondly, smaller government, less spending, lower taxes, a balanced budget and jobs. This list is a clear message. People want government off their back and out of their pocket.

This speech from the throne is about hope, prosperity and jobs. The best way to bring jobs back to Norfolk is through farming, small business and industry. Tobacco and traditional agriculture need nurturing. We must get all aspects of agriculture back on track.

When my grandfather, Toby Barrett, gave his maiden speech to the House of Commons after the war, millions were starving in Europe, and yet, other than the tobacco area, much of Norfolk's rich farm land lay idle. Today millions are starving around the world and, again, much of the rich agricultural riding of Norfolk is being underutilized and priced out of world markets.

Norfolk agriculture derives from two different soil types: sand in the west and clay in the east. Each produces different crops and, by nature, very different concerns. Tobacco, grown on sand, often the target of many anti-smoking, anti-tobacco-farmer, special-interest groups, has contributed greatly to the prosperity of my riding. The tobacco industry has a farm-gate value of \$300 million a year and provides 50,000 jobs for high school students, other local residents, migrant workers and others across the industry.

Each year, tobacco, apple, fruit and vegetable growers depend on offshore labour in our riding. Farmers have a great deal of respect for these workers and a deep faith in their ability and diligence to accomplish this kind of work. The need to preserve labour-intensive agriculture industry in my riding is critical for its social and economic vibrancy.

Ontario has a short growing season. Any unionization of farm labour in whatever sector of agriculture will send production and labour costs soaring, with increased threats of slowdowns and work-to-rule. For this reason, Bill 91 must be scrapped at the same time as Bill 40. In my riding, unionizing the family farm makes about as much sense as gun control.

To the east, my riding comprises beef, dairy, cash crop corn, soybeans and winter wheat. Also in the east is heavy industry. For example, Esso and Stelco have large operations at Nanticoke and must be given the opportunity to invest their dollars free from government intrusiveness.

Port Dover, my home town, is a proud commercial fishing port and a tourist town. Fisheries and fish tugs have existed in this region for generations. This industry, however, is experiencing hard times as it struggles to cope with smaller government quotas every year. With the cooperation of all players—fishermen, fish packers, anglers, environmental groups and the Ministry of Natural Resources—the Lake Erie fisheries can be maintained. The fishermen have demonstrated a genuine concern for the future biological condition of the lake. They now want their turn to bring that concern into action by participating in a recovery plan for the lake.

Our government is committed to improving the safety of our communities. We've got a system now that puts the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of victims and their families. A Victims' Bill of Rights is long overdue. Opposition to gun control has been a predominant issue in my riding—an issue, in my view, of government intrusiveness. As legal users of firearms, farmers in my riding of Norfolk have a respect for the power of these tools and a deep understanding of the need to maintain their guns in the safest of conditions. Guns are not the cause of crime. We cannot treat gun owners as criminals. Criminal activity is not coming from hunters, collectors, recreational shooters and certainly not from farmers.

We are overgoverned. We suffer duplication and even triplication of services in this province. We need a reengineering of government, all levels of government, and the manner in which services are delivered to people. The last 10 years—the lost decade—have been a miserable experiment in liberal socialism based on the idea that we can tax and spend our way to prosperity.

Under both the NDP and the Liberals, Ontarians were subjected to 65 new or increased taxes. Businesses were thus given 65 reasons not to invest in this province. People were given 65 reasons not to pay taxes or to live on tax-free welfare.

For 10 years, Ontarians were sent a very clear message: Your money belongs to the government and the government knows how to spend it better than you do. Our government has created a new roadmap for Ontario, one that does not wander through the forest of special-interest groups, especially special-interest groups financed by taxpayers' dollars, but one that takes the commonsense road to social and economic prosperity.

I'm committed to fulfilling my promises to the people of Norfolk, promises that were clearly reflected in this session's speech from the throne. We—that is, my constituents and I, along with my colleagues in the Legislature—must now make the tough decisions we were elected to make so that we can enjoy the benefits of those decisions with our children.

If we are truly to get Ontario open for business again, and we will, people have told me the first thing they need is for government to get off their backs and out of their pockets.

1620

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Mr Speaker, I'd like to congratulate you on your elevation to the Speaker's job that you've taken on today. Hopefully, you'll be in the chair for many years to come.

I would first of all like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Kingston and The Islands for their trust and confidence that they have shown in me in representing such a historic riding, particularly in the time of this onrushing Tory tide that we saw on June 8.

Kingston is one of the oldest European establishments in North America. Indeed, it's the oldest in Ontario. It was first settled back in 1673, when the Comte de Frontenac established a fort at the mouth of the St Lawrence River to protect French fur traders. After the American Revolution, many Loyalists settled in the Kingston area, and location again was very significant. Kingston was a border town and a base for protecting Canada, threatened by American invasion from time to time.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): Oh, like now.

Mr Gerretsen: In a different way, yes. As a result, Fort Henry was built in the early 19th century. Of course, now it's one of the major tourist attractions that attracts people from all over the world, especially Americans that we love to see there because it's good for our business.

By the mid-1800s, Kingston controlled water traffic on the Great Lakes and was a shipbuilding and commercial centre. In the 1840s, indeed, Kingston became the capital of Upper Canada for three years, and the first Parliament met at the Kingston General Hospital. Kingston indeed entered its golden age with the construction of many of its limestone public buildings and private residences.

As a matter of fact, Kingston was the leader in the heritage preservation movement within this province. Back in 1975, the Ontario Heritage Act was one of the very few acts ever proclaimed outside of this House, and it was done at our historic city hall in Kingston by the then Lieutenant Governor, Pauline McGibbon.

Over 350 designated buildings of historical and architectural significance are within the city of Kingston. There are also two heritage districts within my riding. One of them is the market square, which is located immediately behind our city hall; the other is the village of Barriefield, which is across the Cataraqui River in Pittsburgh township, in that part of the township which is indeed part of my riding. Pittsburgh township, of course, also contains CFB Kingston, which is a major employer in the Kingston area.

The riding also includes three islands: Wolfe Island, which is the largest island of the Thousand Islands, with a permanent resident population of something like 1,300 people, and also Howe Island and Amherst Island, which are located in Lennox and Addington county.

Today, the population of the greater Kingston area is over 130,000 people. Its people are a mix of ethnic cultures, languages, religions, as well as its United Empire roots.

The riding boasts two great universities: the world-renowned Queen's University, and of course Canada's first and now only military academy, the Royal Military College of Canada. We also have an outstanding community college in St Lawrence College.

One of the province's five medical health sciences complexes is located in Kingston, and it's a combination of Queen's, Kingston General Hospital, St Mary's of the Lake Hospital and the Hotel Dieu Hospital. Through their joint efforts, they have established, as the leader of the third party talked about yesterday, the extremely successful alternative funding plan to control health care costs in a cost-effective and businesslike way. It's been a great success and indeed it has been studied elsewhere in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

I would like to pay tribute to the former members who represented Kingston during the time I've lived there over the last 40 years, starting off with Billy Nickle back in the 1950s—he indeed was the minister of planning—followed by Syl Apps, a well-known hockey star and also the minister of corrections back in the 1960s; a good friend and old colleague of my city council days, Keith

Norton, who served here both as Minister of Community and Social Services and Minister of the Environment. Indeed, my mentor, Ken Keyes, was a member of this House back in the 1980s. He was minister of corrections and also Solicitor General. Also, my immediate predecessor, Gary Wilson, who belonged to the party of the third part, who indeed was and still is a classy individual and someone I regard as a friend.

I was involved in local politics for over 16 years as a councillor, and indeed as the longest-serving mayor of the city of Kingston for some eight years. The guiding principle that I always believed in is that government at all levels should be based on the principle of fairness, fairness to all of its citizens, rich or poor, young or old, employed or unemployed. Fairness, compassion and understanding indeed have been the hallmarks of governments in Ontario over the last 50 years, whether we're talking about Bill Davis's years, David Peterson's years or indeed Bob Rae's years.

We should never lose our sense of fairness, equity and compassion to all Ontarians, and that's where this government and this throne speech fail utterly and completely. Only collectively can we build a true and just community which is fair and compassionate to all. It is the actions of a good government that create an identity as a society and as a province through the expression of our shared values.

I don't want to be totally critical. I applaud the government's efforts to cut red tape, to speed up the approval process and to let people know where they stand. And we certainly know where we stand with this government.

I agree that the governments of the past three political stripes have failed in the concept, that they abandoned the responsibility, of building for our children by the practice of borrowing against ours and our children's future. Something must be done.

We live in an ever-changing world with new and difficult challenges, but the arbitrary slash-and-burn philosophy without regard for its effects, as many of its most vulnerable citizens depend on the commitment of government to share in our wellbeing, erodes the moral base of political authority.

Let me give you just a couple of examples that perhaps the government, the members in this House and indeed the general public out there may wish to contemplate.

I ask you, is it fair to fight the deficit reduction battle on the backs of the most vulnerable in our society?

Is it fair to cut the benefits of 41,000 seniors and disabled individuals who are on general welfare assistance when the government promised not to?

Is it fair to cut the benefits of over half a million people by 21.6% when Comsoc's own data indicate that the government's goal could have been easily achieved with a 15% reduction?

Is it fair to claw back earnings before welfare recipients manage to reach their old income levels, contrary to every promise made by this government both during and after the election campaign?

Is it fair to all of us in society, both citizens and offenders, to close halfway houses and thereby in effect

cancel any rehabilitation efforts that criminologists say reduce recidivism, and instead keep them in jail, which is much more expensive? I'll tell you, in Kingston we know about jails. We've got seven of the institutions there.

Is it fair for the Premier to tell municipalities that the province wants to be in full partnership with them at a recent AMO conference the day after the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announces a 20% reduction in transfer payments to municipalities? Is that what you call partnership?

By that action, is it fair to force municipalities to either abandon or slash necessary programs or force them to increase property taxes, which is a much more regressive tax system than the income tax system?

Is it fair to cut those most in need ever deeper and harsher so that the government can cover a generous tax break which will primarily benefit the well-to-do?

Interjections.

1630

Mr Gerretsen: Look, I wrote my own speech. I'm not sure about you guys.

Mr Stockwell: Hey, you don't have to tell us that.

Mr Gerretsen: Is it fair to tell those on welfare to get a job, preferably by the weekend—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Order, the member for Etobicoke West.

Mr Gerretsen: —when there are already more than a half million Ontarians unemployed and looking for work?

Is it fair to refuse to take action in setting up a public inquiry with respect to the unconscionable bonuses and commissions paid out of the public purse to three senior OHA executives?

Is it fair to cut off day care subsidies, especially for those individuals who are trying to upgrade their skills so that they can better compete in the tough job market?

Is it fair to promise social assistance recipients hope and opportunities and instead hit them with cuts and punish them with hardship?

Is it fair for the Minister of Education to threaten to invent a crisis in order to manipulate public opinion? Is that the way this government intends to govern? Let us never confuse popularity with fairness. It may be popular, but it doesn't make it right.

I simply make a plea to this government: Don't try to Americanize our society and create a greater gulf between the haves and the have-nots.

I too share with you your vision to achieve a balanced budget in the province, but let us make sure that all Ontarians share in the pain and sacrifice to achieve this and not just those who are the most vulnerable.

Contrary to the apparent belief of the Common Sense Revolutionaries who are now in power, people are not oppressed by government. Government should be there to assist society in achieving our collective goals, which in turn will enhance the individual liberty and opportunity of each and every one of us in Ontario.

Le Président suppléant : Monsieur le député du Lac-Nipigon.

M. Pouliot: Je vous remercie, Monsieur le Président. Vous allez bien sûr me permettre au début de vous féliciter pour votre réélection comme vice-président de la Chambre. On avait appris, au fil des cinq dernières années, de travailler avec vous. Vous nous avez prouvé, avec votre grâce, que vous êtes un arbitre sans pareil. Donc, avec toute la sincérité que je puisse commander, je crois aussi au nom de mes collègues, j'ajoute aux félicitations que vous avez déjà reçues de tous les membres de la Chambre.

The people of Lake Nipigon, with respect, exercised their franchise on June 8, like those of 129 other ridings in our privileged and blessed jurisdiction, and I want to thank them simply and sincerely.

We do represent a special part in the province of Ontario in a broadly summarized form. Our great riding is nestled in the Canadian Shield between the pristine waters of Lake Nipigon and Lake Superior, the largest of the Great Lakes, and all the way to Hudson Bay. Simply put, it's the province of Nova Scotia, add to it that of Prince Edward Island and of course New Brunswick, and multiply by two: 114,000 square miles, one riding—underpopulated naturally—26% of the overall land mass in the province of Ontario.

I hesitate to think how big the riding of Lake Nipigon shall become if that man there, the Premier of the province, goes through and reduces the number of representation from 130 to 99. When I go back home on a clear day I'll be able to see the earth's curvature. These people are insatiable. They are.

Mr Stockwell: Just think: You might get 7000 votes. **Mr Pouliot:** In power with 70% of the overall favour of the populace, Mr Stockwell, with respect, is indeed very welcome.

June 8, after more than a year and a half on this side of the House—and I know. I started on this side of the House, went there, back, and back here, and I can assure you, with the highest respect for people in our democracy, the worst day where you're sitting is a lot better, sir, than the best day where I'm sitting. The people have decided that I can no longer satisfy my need in terms of vanity and egocentricity, so I have been given an opportunity for humility. But it's not becoming. I don't like it.

By reason of a document, a manifesto, écrit à la hâte—well, no database. As long as it sells, we're not going to be too concerned about details, meticulous whether it adds or not, as long as it works. So we press the right button. What is it you want to hear? You want to hear about so-and-so, with three children on welfare? Ah, I will, I will. Let me calculate. I don't want you to do too much thinking.

Those people are vulnerable, so you press that button and you say, "Vote for me, I sell the best snake oil," and then you go on and on and you begin to lose homogeneity. You begin to distinguish the haves from the havenots.

Those people, we wish them well. They've worked very hard, they've positioned well and they've been

successful. We would like everyone to be rich, but it's not so. Those people who cannot afford to be without a social conscience—the more you have, the more you give. We understand that it costs money and that we have to put the brakes on. No one will deny it. What you have here is a restructuring revolution: the end of an era, the beginning of a new one. But the transition—

Interjections.

Mr Pouliot: In your wisdom, because you have promised that you will do something—and I think you should, because credibility among politicians is not a forte. People have lost faith to a large extent, and I think you should attempt to do what you said you would. By the same token, there is nothing wrong, in light of new arguments, maybe to take a little longer as you're heading in the right direction, to balance the books, because mathematically, beyond the philosophy—and events will supersede philosophy—it's not a killer if you can't. You've done the best you can without dislocating the system.

You know, keep equality in mind. There are people you cannot dislocate; they have nowhere else to go. You haven't played too many games up to now, in my humble opinion, and you're to be commended. But if you say, "We're not going to impact the health system; we will keep spending the \$17.2 billion or \$17.4 billion"—well, you will impact it. Why don't you say it? Simply because every month in the province of Ontario, 10,000 citizens go from being 64 to 65—that's 120,000 a year—and they enter the wheel, they become part of the system, and if you have the same money, well, you need not emanate from Harvard to understand that there's not enough money for the new clientele. Those are the demographics that you will have to deal with.

I don't subscribe—it's not the way I was raised, and without pretence of having had a more difficult childhood than anyone else, it's just that early in life I chose not to adhere to these philosophies. It doesn't mean I'm right, for I've been wrong so often, but surely when all is said and done—life is short and political life is shorter—as one of my colleagues has mentioned, maybe a bit à la proverbiale, we're as rich as the poorest one among us. That has been said quite often, and sometimes it tends to lose its effervescence.

1640

Simplement, les gens que nous représentons — et je vais vous dire franchement, ce qui me fait peur dans l'agenda des conservateurs c'est la hâte, la vitesse, et que ceux qui sont les plus démunis, les plus petits, ceux qui en ont moins, ceux qui n'ont pas de voix, les silencieux, parce qu'avec ces gens, vous savez, on parle peu. Quand on n'a pas d'argent on écoute. Quand on a quelques deniers publics, avec ces gens, vous savez, on perd toujours. Ce sont les pauvres, les démunis. Pourquoi ne pas leur donner une chance d'être un peu comme tout le monde? En latin c'est «equilibrium», l'équilibre, the balance, not too far to the left, not too far to the right.

I want to thank my new colleagues. We'll have to spend more time together over the next four years. What I will not miss, Mr Speaker—there's only you and I, and I wish to tell you this—I will not miss the Conservatives

who were sitting here when I had the privilege to have four ministries and they used to come into my office about every second week, because they realized all politics are local, and said to me, "Minister, spend, spend, spend." If it hadn't been for the election they would have had me in the poorhouse.

We'll have an opportunity in the future with my colleagues. Je vous remercie. Bonne journée.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines): It's a great honour to be invited to take part in the throne speech. I want to start off by thanking people from Victoria-Haliburton for giving me this honour to represent them again in this Legislature. I would just like to say that the people of Victoria-Haliburton, the economy of which is mainly made up of farmers, tourism operators, manufacturers, hardworking people, share the same desires as other people across Ontario.

This summer, as Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines, I had the pleasure of travelling across this great province. The people I met in town hall meetings from Thunder Bay to Geraldton to Moose Factory all shared what residents of my riding were saying during the last year and a half that I've been in public life; that is, they desire a more prosperous Ontario, a restored climate for job creation, value for their taxes, safe communities, a sound health care system, and that all Ontarians have a fair and equal chance at opportunity and progress.

I think what happens is that we sometimes disagree about the means to achieve that end, and that's what elections are for. In this last election we were presented with a clear choice on how to achieve these ends. The people in my riding as well as the majority in Ontario chose a new path, and the path they chose requires major change. I just want to tell you a little bit about where that major change originated from.

I had the honour of sitting across the way for the last year. We travelled as a caucus around Ontario to small town hall meetings, to community functions, to little groups of just five or six interested citizens, to huge audiences, but we asked for input from people from all walks of life. Their ideas were gathered together by our caucus and by our party people. We put it together into a platform and we called it the Common Sense Revolution. It's a complete change in the direction we have been heading as a province.

We outlined in that package clear choices from the way we had been going, and the people could decide. The people gave us a mandate on June 8 to implement that document. That's why I'm so pleased to be debating this throne speech, because it follows so closely the mandate that was given to us by the people of Ontario.

I just want to share a few personal observations on why people would want to have a major change from the way we've been going. One relates back to, as we've heard in this chamber, the debt. Let me tell you that the people of Ontario are ahead of the politicians of all parties. They recognize that their standard of living has been dropping for a generation, and it's not just the previous government. It's the first time I've ever heard

the member for Lake Nipigon suggest that the overspending was created by the third party during the last government, but I can assure you it wasn't.

Working people's standard of living has fallen. It's beyond just Ontario's economy, but it's indicative of what's happened. In the 1970s, we had approaches that said that if we kept on spending we'd have growth and we'd have a balanced economy and this would create the opportunity and the jobs. It didn't. What we got was inflation.

Inflation was fine as long as we could export it. By the end of the 1980s, the end of the Cold War, we could no longer export inflation, so what we've had is growing debt. In the 1970s what would happen is, if a government wanted to raise money, it could devalue the currency, keep on the spending program, say yes to every whim or want. And those savings bonds: The senior citizens who worked all their lives and put the money in the bank would get 10% from the government, you'd have 10% inflation, and then the government would tax you at—you were losing money by investing in your country.

Now we don't have inflation. In the 1990s—and I think the former NDP government got caught with this—you can't have inflation because you can't export it, and what's happened is our currency's devalued, the standard of living, the purchasing power of hardworking people has declined, and they want major change. They want it so they can bring back hope and opportunity to their lives but also their children's lives.

The platform we've laid out, which came from the people right across Ontario, calls for a new way, a way of getting fiscal control of our government spending and also giving back or reducing the tax burden. Sixty per cent of our economy is consumer-driven, and if consumers, working people, have no money in their pockets, it's pretty hard to stimulate an economy.

What our platform, which we got the mandate to implement, calls for is a balanced budget by the year 2000-01, and that calls for significant reductions in spending. We've prioritized where this spending reduction is to occur, and the throne speech outlines that commitment. That's why I'm so pleased. One of the major complaints that you'd hear when you were knocking door to door during the campaign was that all politicians were the same, that this was just a campaign promise, that this was just another Agenda for People, that it wouldn't be completed.

I'm proud to say that we're following through on our commitments and our promises. When it comes to some specific promises in northern Ontario, which were outlined in our Northern Focus and also in our rural report, some of these promises have already taken place.

One was the grandfathering of FACs, the firearms acquisition certificates, which was a major concern to people in the north and in rural Ontario who were forced to go and take an additional course, spend extra dollars to replace maybe a worn-out shotgun for predator control in farming country or a rifle for moose or deer hunting. As of this week they can avoid that duplication. That was one of our commitments.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Until when?

Hon Mr Hodgson: It runs from now until December 31, 1995, because the federal legislation, Bill C-68, if it's passed, makes that impossible. I went to the Senate a week ago with my colleague the Solicitor General, and also the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, to appeal Bill C-68, that it misses the point. I think that was mentioned by my colleague earlier in his speech.

I'm pleased to say that promise and that commitment is being fulfilled and done.

The other commitment we've made is to give northerners a greater say in policies which affect them. To that extent, I've invited all the members from northern Ontario, both provincial and federal, to have a meeting on November 30 to try to set a framework, to try to get their input on how we can make government work better for the people in northern Ontario.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Have you invited your Conservative caucus?

Hon Mr Hodgson: The Conservative caucus will be there, the northern caucus. The Premier and the Treasurer will be there as well. I am pleased to say that this is one more commitment we're trying to fulfil. In a non-partisan way we're trying to make government work better for what's clearly a unique region of the province, and we want to build upon those successes.

1650

What we're trying to do is benefit all the people of Ontario, and I'm proud that we're meeting our commitments and our promises. The electorate sent us a historic message on June 8 that the status quo was unacceptable and needed to be changed, and we're in the process of delivering on that mandate. We're making fundamental changes because it would be irresponsible not to. The debt in this province is reaching \$100 billion. The interest on that debt is \$9 billion. Each year, with compounding interest, it becomes harder and harder to maintain the social safety net in this province.

This isn't the 1960s, when we believed that government can solve all the problems for everyone, and it's not the 1980s, when a generation believed that government was the problem. This is the 1990s, where we recognize that there is a role for government but it's limited, and it must live within its means if it's to be sustainable.

The greatest threat to our standard of living, to our social safety net, to government's role to help those who truly cannot help themselves is this multiplying effect of interest on the debt. It's squeezing our ability as a society to help those in true need.

We're making these changes because it would be irresponsible not to. The government has to stop telling citizens how to live their lives. They must be given more responsibility for their own futures. I'm looking forward to implementing this throne speech.

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): Mr Speaker, it's a great honour for me to stand before you today in this throne speech debate. In fact, this is my first speech in the House and I confess that I feel some awe, standing in this chamber where so many famous and honourable members have stood before.

I would like to pay tribute to the former member for Essex-Kent, who represented my riding with ability, compassion and humility from 1977 to 1990. I respect and admire Jim McGuigan and I continue to value his guidance. I am privileged to follow in his footsteps.

Before I begin, may I congratulate my colleagues in the House from all parties who have been elected to serve in the 36th Parliament.

The first priority of my maiden speech is to express my earnest appreciation to the voters of Essex-Kent who have given me their sacred trust. I don't use the words "sacred trust" lightly. I use them deliberately because I believe that the voters of Ontario are feeling cynical and betrayed, cynical because they no longer believe the promises made to them by politicians at election time and betrayed because some of our most sacred trusts—health care, education and, in my riding, agriculture—are being threatened and slashed by the government that promised them absolute protection.

This government promised jobs and a brighter future for Ontarians. Conspicuously absent from the throne speech is this affirmation of the Tory job plan, nor is there any mention of their election promise not to introduce any new health care user fees. The government now refuses to make a commitment to those 752,000 jobs or to honour its vow to protect health care, education or agriculture. This is surely a breach of trust by the government, a breach of the sacred trust which all of us accept along with the mantle of office. Yet still I believe that I have been called to a noble task: to serve the people of my riding with honesty and decency and to justify their faith and their confidence in me.

Almost two years ago, with the support of my wife, Debbie, and the rest of my family, I made a crucial yet very natural decision: to seek the provincial seat of Essex-Kent. It was a crucial decision because I realized the hard work, dedication and commitment a member must give to public office and to his constituency that he serves. Yet it was a very natural decision because I care so very deeply about preserving Ontario's rich heritage for my family and future generations of Ontario.

Over the past two years I had the opportunity to meet with an incredible number of my future constituents, and I've learned that in rural ridings like mine there is a strong common bond among us, a sense of honour and pride in the concerns, values and beliefs of rural and small-town Ontario. It is a good feeling to know that the values which helped to weave the social fabric of Ontario for generations are alive and well in Kent county and Essex county. So I believe it is noble to serve the people of Essex and Kent, whose values are so consistent with mine.

There are 22 municipalities which make up the great riding of Essex-Kent. It stretches from Ridgetown to the outskirts of Windsor. It is a very large riding which depends primarily on agriculture and manufacturing for its sustenance. Some 85% of my constituents were born in Ontario and are respectable people of average means, 59% with family incomes under \$50,000 per year. These are rural and small-town, middle-class Ontarians who did not vote for higher unemployment, higher property taxes,

health care user fees and eroded classroom services, yet that is exactly what they get with this throne speech. Many of my constituents who need and want jobs are suffering because Mike Harris has not fulfilled his promise to help get people back into the workforce.

I myself fit the demographic profile of Essex-Kent. I am a rural, middle-class Ontarian born in my riding. I've been a farmer all my life, and I'm proud of that fact. My brother is operating the farm alone now so that I can pursue this profession full-time.

I was delighted to be asked by my leader to serve as the agricultural co-critic for the Liberal caucus because I know that I can be a strong voice for Ontario agriculture. I'm grateful to be entrusted with the responsibility for Ontario's second-largest industry. As a long-time farmer and businessman, I understand agriculture and I know what the farming community needs to remain competitive in the face of continual low international commodity prices and new international trade agreements.

During the NDP mandate, Ontario's family farms were all but ignored. While the agricultural industries called for economic initiatives to protect and increase jobs, the \$26-billion industry was hit by debilitating cuts by the NDP. Although overall government spending increased by more than 15% during the NDP mandate, agricultural spending was reduced by 14%, reducing its share of the provincial budget to less than 1% of all provincial spending. But the agrifood industry accounts for 5.8% of all of Ontario's gross domestic product.

When Mike Harris released his Revolution document, he promised farm communities that under a Conservative government agriculture would regain its fair share of government support. The Premier also promised that there would be no cuts to agriculture, not a single dimenickel. I want to quote him correctly; it was not a single nickel. That promise was repeated over and over during the campaign, yet the first agricultural initiative of the government was to axe the Niagara tender fruit lands program. This was followed by Finance Minister Eves's economic statement in July, which announced a \$14million expenditure cut for agriculture, a further betrayal by the government which promised not a single nickel would be cut. I don't know about your standards, but where I come from \$14 million is a very big bag of nickels.

Over the past few weeks, Minister Villeneuve has been visiting farm communities across the province in a series of hastily contrived table talks. It appears that he is seeking validation and appropriation from the Niagara fruit sector to wield the Tory axe. In the words of the OFA president, Roger George, "No one respects fiscal responsibility more than farmers, but indiscriminate budget slashing coupled with current regulatory impediments to innovative economic strategy will freeze agricultural growth. If this government stalls agriculture it will stall the entire Ontario economy."

1700

I intend to work with all of the farm groups in Ontario to force the government to honour its commitments to protect the 608,000 people employed by the agrifood industry. Agriculture is a major source of jobs in today's

economy. Mr Premier, keep your promise to agriculture.

As I said, Essex-Kent is a primary agricultural area, but we also have a fair base of light industry across the riding which provides employment and contributes to our local economy. As in other parts of the province, we have been hit hard by the prolonged economic slowdown and high unemployment. Instead of the help promised by Mike Harris through the development of a major government job creation program, the slash-and-burn policies of the Tories are putting thousands of people out of work across Ontario, many of them in my riding.

Ontario has seen zero job growth since Mike Harris took office. In fact, a major initiative which would benefit many people in my riding, the Chatham ethanol plant of Commercial Alcohols Inc, may be in jeopardy if Premier Harris reneges on the funding commitment of the previous government. This project, which is scheduled to be operational by 1996, would provide 90 direct jobs near my riding plus another 400 indirect jobs in related agribusinesses in and around Essex-Kent, not to mention another 1,100 person-years of construction.

I'm sure that I don't need to say how important the ethanol alternative is to the farmer, to the rural community and to the environment. It opens up a new market for corn growers and is a responsible direction to take in renewable energy resources. The Tories supported this plant during the election and now they alone will decide the fate. I hope they weren't just posturing during the campaign and I hope they carry through on their support for ethanol.

As you consider your budget cuts, Premier, I want you to know that municipalities, hospitals, schools and community agencies in my riding have been experiencing fiscal responsibility and restructuring their services to cost, long before it became the vogue here at Queen's Park. They were deeply concerned about local policing issues, the serious medical underservicing of rural communities in my riding, the shortage of jobs for young people and the need for local-based training initiatives.

The voters of Essex-Kent have entrusted me with the responsibility of representing them at Queen's Park. On their behalf I cannot support the betrayal and broken promises which this throne speech offers.

M. Bisson: Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais premièrement vous féliciter pour votre situation comme notre président dans la Chambre aujourd'hui. Je suis sûr que, même si c'est votre première occasion comme membre de siéger avec nous, les collègues dans cette Assemblée, vous allez sans doute faire un ouvrage qui est sans exemplaire faisant affaire avec vos prédécesseurs.

I would say to the people here in the chamber, and I guess people watching more importantly, because those are who we're here to represent, that all of us in this chamber, both opposition members and I think government members, agree on a couple of things. We all agree on the general direction the government must go in order to be able to, at the end, provide services to the people we represent in the most cost-efficient way. I don't think anybody argues that.

I think all of us have had an opportunity, being in

government over the last 10 years, to really learn to understand what that means in very practical terms. I can tell you, being elected as a member for the first time to this chamber in 1990, some of the impressions I had about government and where the money comes from to pay for programs were much changed because of my experience of being in government for five years. I recognize that at the end of the day, if we're going to provide for each other in this province, we have to have a tax base by which to provide those services so that government in the end can afford to pay for the services that we deliver.

I guess where I take exception to what's happening now in Ontario with the new Mike Harris government is the way in which we're going to get to that balance. Every government has a choice and I think every government has its unique way of doing things. Certainly we had ours. If it had been the Liberals who had won in 1990, I'm sure that the Liberals would have had a different opportunity, a different outlook on how the government does it.

Interjection: They would have done a better job.

Mr Bisson: I'm sure.

Mr Wildman: The Liberals ran on the Tory platform although not quite as tough.

Mr Bisson: That's right. But I guess where the problem lies is that the whole premise of how change is being created in order to be able to suit the means of this particular government—I think the most telling thing that was said since the June 8 election was a cabinet leak on the part of Mr Snobelman—

Mr Colle: Snobelen.

Mr Bisson: Snobelen. Excuse me, I pronounced that incorrectly.

I think about a month, a month and a half ago, when he was quoted being on tape talking to his ministry colleagues within the ministry and the staff he has there and talking about having to create a crisis to justify the means to be able to effect the change, if he did anything wrong as a minister that he should be kicked out of cabinet, it wasn't because he said that but because he actually leaked cabinet secrecy.

Quite frankly, that's what this government is all about. They are trying to make the people of this province believe that the Ontario government and the Ontario treasury is in such crisis as to justify the drastic and draconian measures they are taking and applying their wrath to the people of this province.

The reality is—and a couple of members alluded to it earlier—Ontario's economy has gone through change, and certainly we've had our difficulties, starting with the Tory government before, the Liberals and ourselves, in regard to what's happened to the economy over the last 10 years, and government's had to effect that. But if we take a look at what the economy did over the last five years under the NDP government, the economy actually grew and we had the highest GDP growth of any of the G-7 nations for three years running in this province.

What ends up happening is that the measures that we were putting in place as government in order to be able

to effect the change to balance the budget over the long term would have been a difficult one for even us to do, but in the end, I think, with the approach we have taken as a government, and if given the opportunity over another term, we would have been able to effect in a much different way.

I think what I really resent the most is the attitude that this government is taking towards the working poor of this province and those who are unfortunate enough to be unemployed, because what they're saying is what a number of other members in this chamber have said up to now, that if you're poor, if you're unemployed or you're less fortunate, that's your fault and the government has no responsibility to assist you with your plight.

If we learned anything during the 1930s—and I'm too young to remember it because I wasn't there, but I've heard for years my father, my uncles and my grandfather and senior members of my community in the city of Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Matheson talk about how during the Depression it was really bad, because we did not have the support mechanisms in place in order to soften the impact of the recession of the 1930s, then called the Depression.

If we have been able to support ourselves in great measure during the recession of the 1970s, 1980s and again in the 1990s, it's in great part because of the social programs that governments before us, under the Conservatives, under the Liberals and under us provincially, and under two different governments in Ottawa—we put those programs in place exactly for that reason. We understood as a Canadian society, we understood as an Ontario society, that not everybody within our society, given the same opportunity, will end up at the same place at the end of the day; that if you give everybody the same chance, because of all kinds of situations that occur in their lives, either because of a physical condition with themselves, because of possibly a psychological problem or they're not able to learn at the same speed as others, or just because of what happens in their daily lives, they may not end up at the same place at the end.

What I find very difficult to accept on the part of the Conservative government and some of the members here is this whole notion that just because you made it and you've been successful in business and you've been successful in your lives, you can't understand and fathom why nobody else can come to where you're at. Well, you have to understand not everybody has the same ability sometimes to get to where you ended up. A number of us in the House—and I'm sure members of the Liberal caucus would agree with me, I'm sure the members of this caucus, and I believe some of the members of the Tory caucus understand that principle, that we put in place for each other, through our programs, through our social safety net, as we call it, the opportunity for people to at least have an opportunity to get to at least a bare minimum of standards and a bare minimum of respect as to how we see each other in this economy.

1710

What's happening now is that this government is trying to create the impression that there is a great crisis in this province that is going to justify the changes it's going to impose over the next four years. Yes, you won the election, and I respect the will of the people of this province. I accept that people en masse elected 82 members of the Tory party that forms a majority caucus in this House, and I accept that you have the ability to make change. That is parliamentary democracy and we should never underestimate the voters of the province because, in the end, they're right. But don't think for a minute just because they elected you en masse you have a licence to change the entire fabric of what this society is about because they never gave you that.

One of the things that shocked me the most—it was just as recently as last Friday. I do a local cable program every week in my community where people have an opportunity to call in and to ask questions of me, their provincial member. I did it when I was in government and answered many tough questions from my constituents about things that we did as a government, and I do it now. As a matter of fact, I invite Conservatives on my program, so you guys can defend yourselves.

But what scared me is, I was looking at a tape that was done by a camera crew that went out to ask a simple question in my riding on the corner of Cedar Street and Third Avenue. The question was simply this: How would you rate Mike Harris at this point? The answers were scary. That distresses me not only as a parliamentarian and as a New Democrat, it scares me because people out there are truly mad about what you're doing because they see the fabric of this society changing to the point that they may not recognize themselves when they look in the mirror of Ontario because the mirror will not reflect them, and people are livid.

If I only can implore of you one thing: Yes, effect change. You have licence to do that. But always remember as you're going through the process of changing the programs that serve the people of this province why those programs were put in place. They were put in place for one very simple reason, and that is to provide for those who need it, for all kinds of reasons.

I would only say in closing that I listened to the throne speech with a certain amount of anticipation, and I guess I can genuinely say I wasn't quite surprised. The only thing I will say to you at this point is that I accept that you will make some changes, and I'm sure on many issues we'll be able to agree.

Some of the things in your throne speech I can agree with. You froze Ontario Hydro rates, something that we did when we were in government and something that you will carry on, and I think you're right doing that. You want to eliminate a number of taxes in regard to corporations. I guess there is some merit to doing that.

I think it's a question you should find a better balance, but I implore you, you should be working with the people of this province along with other members in this House, including the opposition caucuses, to try to find a way to balance your change so that in the end the people who are less fortunate in this province are able to see themselves in the mirror of the society called Ontario.

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): It's certainly a privilege to rise in the House for the first time as the elected representative for the riding of Middlesex. It's a

position that I'm honoured to hold and I'm sure it'll be an experience that will be both rewarding and memorable.

I say that with a bit of jest, given that I have the good pleasure of sitting immediately to the right of the member for Welland-Thorold, and I understand from today as well that I'm sitting in the seat of my colleague from Etobicoke West. I'll leave that discretion to the members of the House to determine which is a good and a bad omen.

I'm pleased to have this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts regarding the riding of Middlesex, its people, my predecessors to this position and, most importantly, to reaffirm my commitment to the principles outlined in the government throne speech.

The riding of Middlesex finds its strength in its people who reside in both the county of Middlesex and the city of London. The strength of our region is founded in the diversity of our industrial and agricultural sectors, access to quality educational facilities and world-class medical institutions. Located in the heart of southwestern Ontario, the London-Middlesex region provides a quality of life which is framed by historic urban and rural relationships and a strong sense of community-mindedness.

I'd be remiss not to recognize the contribution of members preceding me by acknowledging their commitment to the riding of Middlesex. Since 1985, time has brought change to Middlesex and change has taken a full circle and in many cases a difference of opinion. However, I do share in common with Irene Mathyssen, Doug Reycraft and Robert Eaton, all former members of this House, the desire to serve the residents of Middlesex well, with respect and to the best of my ability. Much like their contribution in this House, each of these individuals continues to be active and supportive of their respective communities and their interests.

There is, however, one additional name I would like to share with the House, and that is the name of former Minister of Agriculture Mr William Stewart, a person who influenced many in Middlesex and a person who to this day is regarded for his exemplary leadership and conduct. I think it most important as I reflect on the contribution Mr Stewart made to this province, his community, agriculture and agribusiness to note a quote from his book, titled Rural Roots and Beyond. In his book Mr Stewart states that "after 18 years in the Ontario Legislature, I firmly believe that common sense coupled with basic honesty should be the bottom line."

Knowing the humility of this man and his family, I doubt he would consider his statement to be profound. However, it comes as no surprise that the former minister does reference common sense as the bottom line for good government. I strongly believe that if Mr Stewart were alive today, he would be very proud that common sense has finally found its way back into the government's agenda.

Last week's throne speech reacquaints us with and confirms these same principles. Common sense must become the bottom line for Ontario. Now we must set aside our historical recollections of this concept and act. Action is what the government is committed to, but not

as we heard from the leader of the third party yesterday, with his references to fundamentalism, prayer meetings and demonology. There are no indoctrinated puppets in this government caucus and we are not led by simplicity of faith.

As a young person newly elected to represent the riding of Middlesex in this House, I, along with many other young people in this province, commend the Premier's commitment to build a prosperous Ontario and recognize his dedication to value for service, fairness and excellence.

As we look to the future, I believe it is appropriate and, most importantly, the responsibility of this government to ask the question, "What if?" and not, "How much?" The "what if" question can be answered, but it requires a commitment to redefining the role of government and rethinking how and where government should conduct its business. That commitment is clearly articulated in the throne speech.

I believe the bottom line must be fiscal responsibility and we must invest in our greatest asset: people. In that context, and although the Minister of Health is not here today, I commend and thank the minister on behalf of the many concerned residents of east London for the quick and decisive action he demonstrated by reinvesting nearly \$550,000 of administrative health care savings back into front-line services.

In east London, that commitment resulted in the deployment of a new ambulance service to that portion of the city of London, where emergency response times had increased to an unacceptable level, a service that was long overdue.

The "what if" question to which I have already referred, if properly answered, will result in a redefinition of government, forcing us to look ahead to the future. Conversely, the same question also forces us to evaluate our existing strengths, and this government is prepared to do that.

For that reason, I am encouraged that my colleague from Durham-York will be leading a government initiative aimed at promoting and encouraging volunteerism across this great province. I believe, as do all my caucus colleagues, that this is a vital step in recognizing the strengths and commitment of volunteers in this province, utilizing existing resources and not government-generated resources. I am confident that the residents of Middlesex will continue to give their valuable time, energy and resources to help build a stronger and prosperous Ontario.

The underlying message of my statement today is simply this: I support an agenda for change that reinvests in people; an agenda for change that, in part, recognizes the energy and abilities that we possess as individuals or collectively as volunteers; an agenda for change which recognizes the need for fiscal responsibility; and an agenda for change which is prepared to answer the "what if" questions.

1720

I look forward to working with all members of this assembly with the expectation that our collective goal is to restore the prosperity of this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the member for Yorkview.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. First of all, congratulations on your position. I wish you well and I'm sure that you will do extremely well, given the composition of the House.

In addressing my remarks on the speech from the throne, I would like first to—this is not the first time, it's my second time actually that I'm making my stand in this particular House and, given so, I would like to give a brief description of my own area.

I've been living in the Yorkview area for 29, 30 or so years. The composition of my riding is a middle-class working community and you will find every ethnic community, and so there is also the variety of the foods which the ethnic community has to offer. Therefore, any member of the House who wishes to taste the variety will have to come to the area of Yorkview, and of course you yourself are invited, Mr Speaker.

Going to the business area, I fully recognize the honour, the responsibility which has been accredited by electing me in the riding of Yorkview. I'll do my very best to bring dignity and respect to my people and this House.

In addressing the remarks on the speech from the throne, I would like first to congratulate the Premier and his government for keeping perhaps the most important election promise. During the election campaign, the Premier won the confidence of the people of Ontario, or enough of them, by preaching on a daily basis that a Conservative government would be a different type of government. I'm sad to see so soon that the Premier has kept his promise. It is truly a different type of government. Right here on the first page of the document, the speech from the throne, on the front page, on page 1 of the speech from the throne, it says, and I quote, "The agenda is clear... 'Your government is doing what it said it would do, and it will continue."

This is making a mockery of people's trust. Indeed, it continues on page 1, "People want jobs—for this generation and the next." But there is not even one word about jobs in this document. Perhaps I know why. A politician who doesn't make any promises doesn't have to keep any.

But the fact is this, that Mr Harris during the campaign, and so did every other member, I'm sure, promised 725,000 jobs for the next five years—for this generation now, not for the next generation.

"Ontarians want value for their tax dollars and an end to government waste." So the Common Sense Revolution—or how we call it, Revlon—said. Waste, yes. I agree with that, but the government has already increased the burden tenfold.

"Families want safe communities." Yes, I myself and every other member of this House believe that, but instead cuts to funding were made to strapped municipalities.

The Common Sense Revolution states that "funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed." That was on May 3, 1994, but on July 21, 1995, \$14 million

was cut from the Attorney General and Solicitor General budgets.

We all want a sound health care system, but the government swiftly moved to cut \$130 million from the health care budget and now is threatening to close a number of hospitals. No user fees, but now the government is moving to dismantle the health care system as Ontarians have been accustomed to know it.

On page 2 of the document it says, "Parents want schools where children learn." Indeed, Mr Speaker. Indeed, members of the House. We politicians, educators, parents, adults, tell our children: "Go to school. Learn. Be somebody. Go to college. Learn a trade. Go to university." But the truth of the matter is that parents won't be able to have their children get a reasonable education, for the government is eliminating every possibility.

"We want every Ontarian to have a fair chance at a productive and independent life." I'm quoting from this particular document which the government has presented to this particular House. "We want every Ontarian to have a fair chance at a productive and independent life." Is this government for real? With over half a million people unemployed, the highest percentage being youths unable to find a job, with no incentives to create work or jobs, I ask the government, where is the fair chance?

"June 8, the people of Ontario voted for major change," and it says the government "will deliver." It says on page 2 of the document that this government is going to deliver what it is promising. My invitation to the Premier and the government side is, stop promising and start delivering.

Now we are getting proof of that in this particular House, in the words of the Minister of Finance when he says, "We really mean it," in the words of the Chairman of Management Board, my friend the member for Don Mills, when he said in this House a couple of days ago that the government can't back down on its plans: "We have a government that is going to keep its word." I'm sure that I and every member of this House and every citizen of Ontario would like exactly that and nothing less. Don't back down; keep your word.

The citizens of Yorkview, while they saw a glimmer of hope in some of the so-called Common Sense Revolution, they knew better. They were no fools. They knew too well they could not trust a Conservative government, not because they didn't like all the promises, but they knew very well they could not be kept.

So today, on behalf of the people I represent, I would like to challenge the Premier and his government to keep those promises. Make good on the 30% income tax cut. Keep your promise. Don't cut drugs to the seniors. Don't attack the weak and the poor, and the children above all, the innocent, those who cannot speak for themselves.

As far as my people and I are concerned, the document makes as much sense as Jell-O nailed to a tree. The people of Yorkview are hardworking, honest, law-abiding citizens. They pay high taxes and complain very little. The only thing they ask is a chance to have a job, earn a decent living and get on with their lives. I, for one, as a member of this House, will do my very best to see that

the government will deliver hope, faith and opportunities to make everyone's dream a reality in a prosperous Ontario.

1730

Mrs Boyd: Mr Speaker, I'd like to begin by congratulating you on your position, and all of us as members on our re-election or our election to this House.

I'm very proud to be here as the member for London Centre. London Centre is a very remarkable place to live. It is remarkable in many, many aspects that have been mentioned today by other members in terms of their ridings. It is an area that has a great mix of the population of Ontario. In fact, London is often used as one of the trial sites for products and for various ideas. It's known by political pundits as a place where you can go and have some of those focus groups and get a bit of a sense of what's happening in the province of Ontario.

But London Centre, as part of London, is a little bit different, because the people in my part of London have a much lower standard of living than London in general. In fact, the last statistics showed at least a 14% decrease in the average earnings for people in London Centre than in general in the province of Ontario.

London Centre comprises the industrial heart of downtown London. Many of you will know that, as is true in many older communities, industries that were there as part of the beginning of London have very often disappeared, and many of those have disappeared in only the most recent past.

The retail community of London, which used to centre on Dundas Street and Richmond, too has seen a great change and, as is true in many cities across this province, has seen a great decline with the growth of mammoth shopping centres far out on the outskirts of the city, often in the riding represented by my colleague from Middlesex. So what we see is the centre of a town that is going through what the centres of many urban areas of our country and of North America are facing, and that is a real effort to restructure its economy, a real effort to take care of the people who live there, to maintain the urban residential base, and to ensure that the problems which beset the inner city do not overcome us in London Centre.

We also are typical of Ontario because in my riding we have a huge gap between the rich and the poor. The vast majority of those who live on social assistance, who require various forms of assistance from both the federal and provincial government, reside within the boundaries of London Centre. Many of those who are most unfortunate are part of my constituency.

We have the largest number of street people in London who reside in one form or another on our streets, in our alleys and in various areas that, really, people should never have to live in. But we also have those who have been very fortunate and privileged, who have belonged to a powerful élite, who have been able to gain the education and the training to improve themselves, to purchase for their families the kind of future we all want for our families. So the contrast is very high in my riding, and one of the issues for me is how to balance that contrast.

We have in the throne speech an outline that tells us that this gap is going to increase, that the gap between one constituent and another in my riding is going to increase dramatically with the policies that have been introduced by the new government.

A nearly 22% drop in income for people on social assistance is an enormous drop. It's always a drop for all of us. Many of us on this side of the House experienced a huge drop in our income, so we understand this, but the effect on us at the salaries we earn is very, very different from the effect on the subsistence rates that people get on social assistance. That 22% represents the difference between some kind of hope and no hope for the future, often no hope for the next meal for many families in my riding.

Those who think that this drop in social assistance rates affects only those who are on assistance better think again, because that drop means a huge drop in income for the retailers, already struggling in my riding. People on social assistance spend every cent they get every month, and they spend it within their neighbourhoods. It is very, very important for us never to lose track of the fact that small businesses struggling to make ends meet in tough times are going to lose a lot of their income from people who have spent it in their neighbourhoods in the past. The small grocery stores and the small retailers are going to feel that drop in income.

Small landlords who are making ends meet, many of them people on fixed incomes who are able to pay their taxes and maintain their homes because they can rent a property, will have difficulty doing that with the subsistence rates that are now going to be provided for housing by people in this province.

The next problem we have is the housing issue itself. We have many people in substandard housing in my riding, as we do in many urban areas, in fact as we do in many rural areas, and this government has destroyed a progressive housing program that had promised low-cost, decent housing to hundreds of people in our riding, people who have no opportunity now to enjoy what the majority of people in this province always dream of in terms of decent housing.

This government is withdrawing its support from many community agencies. A 20% cut in health care—we believe, from the weasel answer that the Health minister gave—is very important in a community like mine, with three major hospitals and a psychiatric institution. That's a lot of jobs. We already have been restructuring our hospitals in our city to try and make them more effective, to try and meet the needs that we agreed, as a government, needed to be met. We knew that costs needed to be controlled in the health area, but we believed that communities could best do that themselves, and now we find that all that work is threatened by the Tory knife. That is very distressing, because the jobs that are lost are again going to impact on our small businesses, on our landlords, on our housing industry, and that will have a great effect on our economy.

We also are a university and college town, so that means that faculty and staff are going to be affected by the kinds of cuts that we suspect are coming in the education area. Also our students, thousands and thousands of students, who are looking at the prospect of increased tuition fees such as we've never seen before in this province: 70%. And that again, my friends, is going to impact upon the ability of our city to maintain itself as a regional and commercial capital in this southwestern Ontario region.

So I'm deeply concerned. I'm deeply concerned that we understand that this is not a problem that affects a few; it is a problem that affects us all. We do not have to have our hearts on our sleeves for just a small minority or a special-interest group, as the government is so fond of calling anyone who disagrees with its policies. It is going to affect us all and it is going to affect especially those groups that this government purports to support the most. That is a very serious issue.

We are often accused of trying to maintain the status quo, a very amusing accusation for people who are social democrats, because in fact we do not want to accept the status quo. The people of Ontario didn't want the status quo of 1985, and that's why they elected a new government in 1985. They didn't want the status quo of 1990 either. But when they went to the polls in 1995, they did not think they were restoring the status quo of 1965, and basically that's what we're seeing: a rush to the past on the part of this government that is going to restore a way of life to this province that only supports power and privilege and forgets all the others.

1740

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): On June 8, the people in my riding of Scarborough Centre, like people all across this province, took a chance on us as elected representatives. They took a chance that maybe, just maybe, a politician can still be trusted; that maybe, just maybe, a politician will act with the common sense that every family and business in this province acts with on a daily basis. They took a chance at believing in what we said we would do.

This is an issue that I feel strongly about, and it is why I am proud to be a member of this government and why I am proud to sit on this side of the chamber with the honourable Premier. It is also why I'm so very pleased to congratulate you on your position as Deputy Speaker and that of Mr Speaker McLean on his election to that most honourable chair.

The voters of this province have given us one last chance to earn their faith, to prove to them that we can work with vigour, honesty and decorum.

Speaker McLean's election is both a testament to his many years of dedicated service to this chamber and to the people of Ontario and a testament to the honesty and decorum that has marked his years of service. Perhaps no other Speaker has had to serve at such a time of cynicism towards our profession, but I, like my colleagues, am confident that Speaker McLean will be capable of ensuring that we stay on line, stay focused on our tasks, and earn back the faith of every Ontarian.

I'm sure there are a number of members and a number of Ontarians who were surprised to hear what this government committed itself to accomplish in this throne speech—surprised because it has been so long since a government stood, unwavered, behind its promises.

What we said in this throne speech was nothing new. It was nothing that Ontarians haven't heard before. Premier Harris has stood steadfast behind his commitments for some years now. It was 1992 when the first New Directions was published by the Conservative caucus, it was in May 1994 that the Common Sense Revolution was released, and it was one week ago today that the throne speech restated our commitment to Ontario. This government is committed to restoring public confidence in our elected representatives by living up to our commitments and doing what we said we would do.

As I stand in this chamber today and make my first remarks, I cannot help but look back at something from my childhood. When I was only eight years old, my father, Victor Newman, who I'm proud to say is here today to hear me speak, underwent surgery, and while he was recovering the grass on our family's lawn began to grow too long. Now, my mother didn't use the lawnmower and my sister and I were not allowed to because we were too young. So my eight-year-old mind decided that something had to be done. I sat down and wrote a letter to then-Premier Davis. In the letter I asked him, if he was truly "doing things for people," as his campaign slogan had said, then he should find someone to cut my family's grass. A few days later our grass was cut.

In Premier Davis's letter back to me, he wrote: "I hope that you grow into a young man who will continue to be concerned about people." To this day I continue to be concerned about people, and that is why I stood for election, and that is why I support Premier Harris and our government's commitments. It has taken almost 25 years, but today the people of Ontario once again have a Premier who truly cares about Ontario and Ontarians.

Since my election, a number of people have asked me if I find the transition to being MPP—

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's clearly against the standing orders of this House for a member to impute any motive in regard to how one Premier might feel about this province one way or another. We've had good premiers, under Mr David Peterson as well as Mr Rae, and for him to impute that, I think he is out of order.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. You are out of order.

Mr Newman: I understand, Mr Speaker, from a parliamentarian that when you're heckled it means that you're being effective in your speech, so I thank the honourable member for his compliment.

Since my election, a number of people have asked me if I find the transition to being MPP after working 10 years in the circulation department of one of this city's newspapers difficult. I'm happy to inform this chamber that it is not much of a change at all. In fact, after 10 years with the little newspaper that grew, I think I have the perfect experience to be part of the little caucus that grew.

I'm extremely pleased to be able to stand in this chamber today as the member for the riding of Scarborough Centre. Born and raised in Scarborough Centre, I continue to live in the riding with my wife, Karen, and our daughter, Alanna. Indeed, my connection to the riding goes as far as that both the riding and I were created in 1963.

Bordered on the north by Lawrence Avenue East and the south by Lake Ontario, the riding extends from Markham Road in the east to Kennedy Road in the west. And what a pleasure it is to have my riding surrounded by such dedicated and distinguished members: the honourable Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, Marilyn Mushinski, in Scarborough-Ellesmere, Mr Gilchrist in Scarborough East and Mr Brown in Scarborough West.

Scarborough Centre has a proud tradition of sending some of the best and brightest to sit in this chamber, distinguished members like Mr George Peck, Mrs Margaret Renwick, Mr Frank Drea, who served our riding with honour for 14 years, my friend the Reverend William C. Davis, Cindy Nicholas, who continues to practise law in Scarborough Centre, and my predecessor, Mr Steve Owens.

Scarborough Centre is truly a remarkable riding and one that I am proud to call home. It is time, however, for politicians to stand up and speak out in support of Scarborough. Scarborough bashing must end. In fact, the honourable Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation was active in Scarborough in this regard. The honourable minister established the Action Scarborough Committee while she served as a Scarborough city counsellor.

Scarborough Centre is home to some of this province's most beautiful areas, areas like the Scarborough Bluffs. It also has an active artistic community. In fact, just recently Canada Post issued a stamp commemorating the comic book hero Nelvana of the Northern Lights, created in 1941 by the late artist Adrian Dingle, whose wife, Pat, is a proud and active Scarborough Centre resident. Just this past week, Scarborough Centre residents were able to visit homes of area artists and view their works as part of Scarborough's ArtsWeek.

Yesterday I was pleased to attend the rededication of Scarborough's Albert Campbell Square, named after Albert McTaggart Campbell, Scarborough's first mayor.

Next year is Scarborough's bicentennial, and I would urge each member of this chamber to come out and experience Scarborough.

More ethnically diverse than most areas in this province, Scarborough Centre is home to some of the most community-oriented citizens. My campaign team was made up of so many concerned citizens who had never before participated in an election but who cared enough about the future of our province to get involved and to try to do something to bring about the much-needed change.

I remember how Willy and Susan Stanford allowed me to put a sign on their lawn, the first politician they'd ever let put up a sign. Why? Because they believed in the changes that Premier Harris was calling for and because they saw the possibility that maybe, finally, Ontario could have a government that could be trusted and believed.

It is because of the community spirit in Scarborough Centre that I am so pleased to hear in the throne speech that the Premier has directed an initiative to support and nurture the spirit of volunteerism. Community associations and volunteer groups thrive in Scarborough Centre, and I would suggest to the member for Durham-York and parliamentary assistant to the Premier that she can look to some of my constituents for help in this initiative, constituents like Cay Shedden and Crawford Smyth, who have been honoured for their efforts. For far too long governments and politicians have tried to do everything for everybody while forgetting that this province flourished with the spirit of volunteerism long before President Kennedy called on our southern neighbours to act that way.

The residents of Scarborough Centre, like the residents across this great province, are fed up with the shift away from the rights of victims. They stand firmly behind initiatives this government will introduce, like the Victims' Bill of Rights. Indeed, as the throne speech mentions, there are too many stories of victims of crime, stories like that of my constituent Mr George Barber, who was savagely beaten in our local Radio Shack store. Mr Barber and many of my constituents are happy to see a provincial government that is finally standing up for the rights of victims and not standing aside to special interests.

During the election campaign, I had the pleasure to be able to speak with most of the residents in Scarborough Centre, as I knocked on every door and on every street in my riding, streets like Haileybury, Graylee, Martindale, Oakridge, Magnolia, Atlee, Blakemanor and Scarborough Heights. And let me assure you, Mr Speaker, that I do not plan to be one of those politicians who only walks the riding during election campaigns. I will be out doing it again before this session is over and again during every session that I am here.

At every door I was confronted with the same desire from residents: a desire to see government stimulate job creation and economic growth by cutting spending, cutting taxes and ending the warped view that a government needs to have its hands on everything and everybody in this great province.

1750

Scarborough Centre residents supported the Common Sense Revolution, they supported Premier Harris and they are happy to see that this government has committed itself in this throne speech to doing what it said. This government is committed to reducing government red tape, restoring balance to labour relations, ending unfair job quotas and providing a climate where business expansion and investment is welcomed and encouraged.

The throne speech proves that this government is also committed to ending the cycle of welfare dependency and despair by getting able-bodied welfare recipients back into the workforce, to create a system that acts as a hand up, not a handout.

I'm also pleased to stand today as the parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs and commit my energies to ensuring that all aboriginal peoples in Ontario are treated with the dignity, honesty and openness that the two previous governments failed to give them.

I would like to close by thanking everyone, including the members opposite, who have sent their congratulations and best wishes to me since my election.

The Speaker: Thank you. The member's time has expired. Just wrap it up.

Mr Newman: As the member for Prescott and Russell, Mr Lalonde, conveyed to me in August, Ontarians do deserve and expect us to build a better future for them and the generation to come, and by working together in this chamber we can put Ontario back on the road to prosperity.

Ms Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I'd like to thank the voters from Windsor-Sandwich and LaSalle for placing me here today. I'm committed to them and to the Liberal Party during my time here. I'd also like to thank our leader, Lyn McLeod, and colleagues in the Liberal caucus. Their guidance and assistance is certainly going to be useful and has so far been most helpful to me. I'd like to thank as well the legislative staff for their help in the transition of a rookie member like me into one who may know the legislative process.

I plan to work well with the federal members from my riding, and those are the Honourable Herb Gray and member of Parliament Susan Whelan. I might say too that I thank the Honourable Herb Gray for bringing me here and leading me into a life of politics.

I'd like to remember the message from my friends in the Rotary Club of Windsor who will always be there to remind me of service above self and, in particular, how vital that is to this line of work.

I can tell you, Mr Speaker, that my first day here in this House for the throne speech was about as appealing to me as plunging my way through day-old dishwater to unplug the plug. You really don't want to do it but you recognize that you must. I'm speaking of the pandemonium that reigned only three months into this new government, and I reluctantly came here to hear a throne speech, a message that does not bode well for the people of Windsor-Sandwich and LaSalle.

The throne speech spoke of encouraging private sector job creation by cutting taxes and red tape for business. By its own admission, this is more than a year away. In the meantime, this government has left people questioning the status of jobs they have now—municipal employees, LCBO employees, thousands of employees in the non-profit sector, the health sector, the education sector, and all small business that feeds and clothes and serves these sectors.

Will these people do anything but save anything gained in tax relief? Will those savings do anything more than pay down an increasing municipal tax, thanks to further downloading of costs to municipalities, done in the guise of allowing municipalities the freedom to choose the services they'd like to offer their citizens?

Am I worried about this government's move to completely eliminate Bill 40? I am. Am I worried that workers in Windsor and LaSalle will heed labour leaders' call for anarchy in Ontario? I am. This government's closed-door policy so far for dialogue with labour and business on this issue is foolhardy. Labour and business in my community have achieved a healthy partnership through communication and compromise; I beg of this government to do the same.

What didn't I hear in the throne speech? I didn't hear confirmation of a much-touted campaign promise to not cut health care. What I've witnessed instead is the cutting of millions of dollars from our system and in my community the reneging on a promise of the level of capital and community dollars required to finish the implementation of a merger of four hospitals into two, mergers which have already taken place. More frightening still is the likelihood of further cuts, massive and swift cuts to our health care, to our health system without the time for planning a process to cope.

If only the people at home could see the Minister of Health wringing his hands with glee as he plans the further cuts, they would be appalled. Which of the seniors in South Windsor will be affected by the additional cost of drugs? Which of the young families in LaSalle will wait impossible lengths of time for care by paediatricians, by obstetricians?

The throne speech outlined the severe and drastic cuts to those on welfare, with the message to these 7,000 families in Windsor to get out and get a job. May I submit that despite a flourishing economy in Windsor our unemployment rate stands at 10.4%. Where, where are these jobs? Those constituents who have frequented my office are asking me the same: Where are these jobs?

Would that there were jobs for the people panicked about how to make ends meet and deciding what will be eliminated from their shopping list. Panicked too are the disabled who got caught in a system that wasn't supposed to face cuts, but they are. People like Jake Airey, whose story was told in a recent Toronto Star letter.

I resent the government's actions so far, cutting child care spaces for those straining to get off the system. Tell me where the savings are in creating the vicious circle that won't let those retraining or finishing an education finally get off the system. Child care was the critical component in this equation. That was foolhardy.

What of the children from these families on social assistance? Well, we know it's a parent's responsibility to care for children. Are we prepared for the backlash when parents fail, perhaps because they can't? Our children's aid societies are strained and barely coping now, and so are the several agencies that deal with children, and they face a 7.5% cut over the next several months. How are they going to cope?

This government must not realize the negative and costly effects of reduction in children's services. It will come back to haunt this government in these next four years, and might I remind the members of government that little people have this propensity to become big people, people who will be leaders and voters in Ontario.

I'm particularly concerned about the children in Ontario. In my riding you'll find an inordinate amount of children who are in desperate need of children's services and agencies facing long waiting lists, with children on them—one child psychiatrist in the whole of Essex county, a population of 350,000 people. You'll find a higher-than-average teenage pregnancy rate, a higher-than-average number of low-birthweight babies, all of these things pointing to a desperate need for early intervention through children's services, and yes, those very agencies facing brutal cuts by a very shortsighted government.

Finally, I must say that this government has indeed been very busy these past three months; its focus has been strictly cutting. If only this time were spent with equal vigour focusing on how to get Ontario working again, how to lay fertile soil for jobs, how to reverse the months-long trend of no new jobs in Ontario.

I will make it my job to remind this government that it must lead with reason and with compassion. Our voters are not ideological, they are real people with real needs. I must say that on my letterhead—and the people who sent me here, we're driven by a Latin motto, a phrase that says, "Ad augusta per angusta," and it means "Triumph through hardship." Indeed, the people of Windsor-Sandwich and LaSalle have seen that and we're prepared to rise above it, and we're prepared to fight the government on all of these actions.

The Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands /	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kingston et Les Îles	, , , , ,
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barb (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
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	without Portfolio, Workers' Compensation Board /	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
	ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, Leo (PC)
	la Commission des accidents du travail	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Solicitor
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	Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de		solliciteur général et ministre des Services
	la Consommation et du Commerce		correctionnels
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Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)		women's issues / ministre des Affaires
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Chair of the		intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la
	Management Board of Cabinet / président du		Condition féminine
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Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)		Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et
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	Economic Development, Trade and Tourism /	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
	ministre du Développement économique, du	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Rob (PC)
	Commerce et du Tourisme	Muskoka-Georgian Bay /	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
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Minister of Finance, government House leader / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances, leader

parlementaire du gouvernement

Perth Johnson, Bert (PC) Peterborough Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Port Arthur Gravelle, Michael (L) Prescott and Russell /

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Hastings-Sud Quinte

Rainy River Renfrew North / -Nord Riverdale

S-D-G & East Grenville /

S-D-G et Grenville-Est

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St George-St David

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Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC) Hampton, Howard (ND) Conway, Sean G. (L) Churley, Marilyn (ND)

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Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires

municipales et du Logement Boushy, Dave (PC) Martin, Tony (ND)

Phillips, Gerry (L) Gilchrist, Steve (PC)

Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs

Scarborough North / -Nord Scarborough West / -Ouest Simcoe Centre / -Centre

Simcoe East / -Est

Simcoe West / -Ouest

Sudbury Sudbury East / -Est Timiskaming

Victoria-Haliburton

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Martel, Shelley (ND) Ramsay, David (L)

Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles et ministre du Développement du Nord et

des Mines

Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of

Labour / ministre du Travail Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Toni (PC)

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autochtones Kwinter, Monte (L) Cooke, David S. (ND) Pupatello, Sandra (L) Duncan, Dwight (L)

Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports

Parker, John L. (PC) Turnbull, David (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Rae, Bob (ND) Sergio, Mario (L)

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 5 October 1995

Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 5 octobre 1995



Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 octobre 1995

The House met at 1332. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): Yesterday in this House the minister responsible for women's issues, while responding to a question from the Leader of the Opposition regarding second-stage housing projects for victims of sexual abuse, delivered a very interesting answer. The minister said that when she met with a group of women about second-stage housing earlier this week, the group told the minister, "There is room for more coordination and efficiencies."

I'd like to inform the minister and this House that we've received a letter from the people the minister met with. The minister might find it interesting to know that the coordinator of the workshop for women's abuse coordinating committees had a very different interpretation of what they told the minister at that meeting.

In fact, the letter I have states that during the time the minister was at the meeting, there was absolutely no discussion about possible cuts to second-stage housing. In fact, the focus of the conference was, for various sectors involved in women's abuse, to improve coordination to be more effective in responding to abused women.

I was shocked when I received this letter. I know that while in opposition the member for London North was an effective advocate for women and children throughout the province. I'm concerned that now, as a member of cabinet, where the minister can directly influence public policy, she has forgotten her commitment to women's issues.

The minister responsible for women's issues is supposed to be a voice for women across the province, yet she does not seem to be concerned about the welfare and the suffering of abuse victims in Ontario.

I hope the minister will quickly retract and apologize to the women's abuse coordinating committees from across southern and central Ontario.

TRANSIT SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Last July the Ministry of Transportation cut transit services for the most vulnerable, the disabled, yet the minister tried to blame this on the Toronto Transit Commission. But the government's cut was specifically, deliberately designed and addressed to transit services to the less fortunate, the disabled. Apparently, the government's pledge to protect the truly vulnerable in our society is totally null and void, as they have specifically focused on disabled transit for cuts.

I want to read to you, Mr Speaker, and I want to take you back to the last election campaign when the Conservatives answered a questionnaire, "A Mike Harris government would remain committed to funding fully accessible conventional public transportation, community buses, accessible taxis, and specialized transit services."

Since the election they have become indeed most economical with the truth. Many of the services are put in jeopardy. The cuts simply mean that some people may have to quit their jobs because they won't have reliable transportation. It's as simple as that.

Helping people get back to work was another Conservative promise, and yet you have broken that promise. You're using the disabled, people who don't have a voice, to fulfil your agenda. When will you restore equilibrium to give everyone an equal chance to have accessible transit?

JESSE'S JOURNEY

Mr Bob Wood (London South): Sir, may I first congratulate you on your election as Speaker. I am sure that you will preside over this House with both fairness and efficiency.

I rise today to report on a very important event that took place last weekend in London; namely, the conclusion of the first phase of Jesse's Journey. As many members of this House will know, Jesse's Journey is a project of London South's Jesse and John Davidson, with a goal of raising \$1 million this year for gene and cell therapy research. This research holds the prospect of a cure for several genetic disorders.

This journey started in northwestern Ontario and ended some four million steps later in Ottawa in the office of the Prime Minister of Canada. We learned last Saturday that over \$800,000 of the \$1-million goal has already been raised, with excellent prospects for the balance, and that Jesse's Journey is going to be an annual fund-raising drive.

I know that every member of this House will join with me in congratulating two outstanding Canadians, Jesse and John Davidson.

RED HILL CREEK EXPRESSWAY

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I would like to bring to the attention of the Minister of Transportation another broken promise by the Progressive Conservative government in regard to the funding of the Red Hill Creek Expressway in Hamilton-Wentworth.

On December 15, 1994, while leader of the third party, Mike Harris said, "A Mike Harris government will support and fund a full-fledged expressway, up to and including the six-lane model which was originally approved." On July 21, 1995, Finance Minister Ernie Eves cut the funding for the Red Hill Creek Expressway by 50% for 1995 and possibly the same for 1996.

I want to remind the Minister of Transportation that it was the NDP's cancellation of this project that delayed

economic growth, that delayed construction in Hamilton-Wentworth, that cost jobs. It was the same cancellation of this project that caused five out of six members of the NDP government to be defeated in Hamilton-Wentworth during the 1995 election.

I want to remind the Minister of Transportation that this commitment must be lived up to. The promise made by the Premier was not conditional. The promise made by the Premier was not one of deferrals or, "Possibly we'll fund it"; the promise was clear and unequivocal. This delay is going to cause delay in the completion. There's no guarantee that this government will restore the funding next year or the year after, which will cause further delays both in the east-west and north-south portions.

I say to this minister: I'd appreciate it if you can live up to the commitment made by your Premier to the people of Hamilton-Wentworth. Come through with the full funding. If that doesn't happen, the same fate, I'm sure, will occur to the members of your government as happened to the government that is now third in the House.

1340

SPENDING REDUCTIONS

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): This government day after day repeats in this House that the purpose of the cuts, the purpose of the policies that they are putting forward, is to force the people of Ontario to become more independent, and yet with each day we find that each of their cuts reduces the ability of people to become independent. Let me give you some examples.

The cutting of Jobs Ontario Training: One of the most successful programs ever put in place, not only in Ontario but across Canada, to make it possible for people to work in private industry at full salary while obtaining the training for themselves and for fellow workers, was cut. Sixty-five thousand people were participants in that successful program and they have lost their opportunity to be independent.

Yesterday we found that counselling in second-stage housing facilities is to be cut to women who have escaped battering situations. Again, that counselling helped those women to become independent. We hear that they have destroyed funding for homes for pregnant teenagers, again, homes dedicated to helping those young women be successful parents and maintain a productive place in their communities.

Every example we bring forward shows that in fact it is nonsense that the policies of the Conservatives will create independence for those who wish to have that more than anything else in their communities.

CALABOGIE PEAKS RESORT

Mr Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): It is with great pleasure that I announce to this House that Calabogie Peaks Resort will be open for business this winter. The people of Lanark-Renfrew will once again have the opportunity to enjoy the excellent downhill skiing which Calabogie has to offer.

This opening will represent new jobs, more tourism and greater private sector growth for Calabogie and Lanark-Renfrew. For their efforts I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for their cooperation and the municipal council of the township of Bagot and Blythfield for passing a draft plan and zoning bylaw which paved the way for this development.

Congratulations must also go out to the management of Calabogie Peaks Resort for their true entrepreneurial spirit and their commitment to the community. You see, Calabogie Peaks has been closed since 1991. I first became involved at that time to try and assist in obtaining approvals at the provincial level for the necessary plans required.

Now, thanks to the policies and direction that this government is prepared to take, businesses in Ontario are experiencing a new sense of optimism and confidence by removing the barriers to job creation and eliminating red tape.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESS GALLERY

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Tonight there will be farewell party for eight members of the Queen's Park media who are moving on. The Liberal caucus wanted to purchase a little gift for those who were departing. Obviously, we wanted to show our appreciation. We wanted something that was symbolic and of course not too expensive and we wanted it to reflect the new Mike Harris government.

We thought about that in caucus this morning, then the decision became obvious and we went out today and bartered for some tins of tuna for the departing members. We were fortunate; we were able to get it. We got eight tins of Dave's Tuna, and there's a cute little picture of a cat on here.

Interjection: How much?

Interjections.

Mr Phillips: Well, we couldn't find the 69-cent tuna. This happened to be 79 cents, but the Liberal caucus threw in the extra 10 cents and so we're very pleased. I think this reflects the new government for the departing members: Dan Nolan from the Hamilton Spectator, Rob Savage from Thomson News, Bob Weiers from CBC, Colleen McEdwards, Havard Gould, Annie Gagnon, Shane Roberts and John McKay. We will present this to them tonight.

It's a fine memento of the new Mike Harris government and I think it will be something they'll always remember, even though it was 79 cents instead of the 69 cents that we've been promised. We're quite prepared to throw in the extra 10 cents for the fine Queen's Park gallery.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): On Tuesday, I asked a question of the minister responsible for women's issues. I was disappointed that she chose not to answer my question related to the cancellation of birthing centres and other cuts to services to women and children. However, I did then give her the benefit of the doubt and stated that I thought she really did care.

Well, like thousands of others across Ontario, I was shocked to the core when I heard that the government is slashing millions of dollars from the budgets of transition houses for battered women and their children. I can't tell

you the despair I felt when the minister responsible for women's issues stood on her feet and carefully mouthed the already tired mantra from the Common Sense Revolution.

She made no apologies for these devastating cuts and indeed suggested that they were needed and would not hurt women. We are talking about enormously vulnerable people here. In some cases, we are literally talking about life and death. To top it all off, her caucus applauded loudly and approvingly when she completed her answer.

I am disgusted with the ease and complacency with which this government is making cuts to the poor and vulnerable so they can give tax cuts to the well-off. Madam Minister, please talk to your Premier. Use your seniority, your influence, to reverse this terrible, tragic decision and do it today.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): I would ask that the honourable members, when they are at home this weekend enjoying the bounty of this year's harvest, take time to remember all those who make up Ontario's agricultural family. These are the people who work so hard to produce the food we all enjoy.

I would also like to draw attention to the advertisement I ran across in Tuesday's edition of a well-known daily newspaper. This ad placed by the Royal Bank begins: "You have a lot on your plate. This weekend would be a good time to thank the people who put it there." The ad then points out the importance of agriculture and agribusiness to our economy and closes, "Thanksgiving wouldn't be the same without agriculture."

I feel that this is a fitting tribute to the great contribution our farmers make, not just to our economy but to all our lives.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The time for statements has expired.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I rise to request of the House unanimous consent to note the passing of a previous member.

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

BERNT GILBERTSON

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to pay tribute to my predecessor as the MPP for Algoma, Bernt Gilbertson, who served in this place from 1967 to 1975, who passed away this summer after the last session was completed.

Previous to serving in the Legislature, Bernt served as a member of the school board in his area. He was very active in his community and very active in his church. He was well known for his good humour and generosity and the dignity with which he conducted himself in all areas of his life.

He lived a long, full and happy life which began as a young man working on the lakers along the Great Lakes. He later married Rose Hawdon of St Joseph Island and settled down there to raise a very large family. He became very well known as a producer of maple syrup and as an owner of a pancake house and the operator of

a trucking business. As a matter of fact, he was well known in this place for supplying maple syrup every spring to most of the members of the Legislature, and when I came here in his stead, I found that I was expected to bring cans of maple syrup from St Joseph Island down here for members every year.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Well?

Mr Wildman: There are still some members with memories long enough who expect me to do it, but luckily for me they aren't all here yet.

One of the major issues that Bernt dealt with as a member was a need and desire to have a bridge built from the mainland to St Joseph Island, an issue that had been talked about for over a century and that came to fruition in the early 1970s after Bernt had raised the matter many times in this Legislature.

Last fall, I had the pleasure to join with the people of St Joseph Island and members of the Gilbertson family to officially name the St Joseph Island Bridge the Bernt Gilbertson St Joseph Island Bridge as a lasting tribute to the commitment of Bernt Gilbertson to the people of Algoma and particularly to the people of St Joseph Island.

In the last few years, Bernt had suffered from ill health and his passing was a great loss to everyone in the community.

Our sympathy goes out to Mrs Gilbertson and her family. They have a right to be very proud of the work of a former deputy whip and government whip in this Legislature and a real community worker.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I would like, on behalf of my party, to express our condolences to Mr Gilbertson's family as well. I noticed that the member for Algoma, being a member of the third party, did not happen to mention that Bernt was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. You might have guessed that from his background as an entrepreneur and a businessperson. Bernt as well was a man of great generosity in terms of bringing to the Legislature each spring maple syrup for everyone. But Bernt, while he was here, also served as the caucus chairman and the chief whip of our party and so was given significant responsibility at that time.

It's also important to note that his wife, Rose, at that point in time when Bernt was a member here, served as his constituency assistant. Now, our rules don't allow any member to hire their spouse at this point in time, but it should be noted that Rose worked for nothing, and therefore there wasn't a problem with conflict between what he was doing and the other.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Why didn't you follow his example?

Hon Mr Sterling: The member for Windsor-Riverside says that he would like to follow that example, and I think he should.

Bernt Gilbertson knew many of the members. I was only elected in 1977 but was informed by many of the members when I did come to the Legislature of their love and respect for this man and the fact that Bernt Gilbert-

son, when he spoke in this Legislature, did not speak so much as a partisan but on behalf of the people he represented in the riding of Algoma.

I'd like to thank the present member for Algoma for attending the funeral and speaking on behalf of the members of the Legislature at that time.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I'm privileged to stand on behalf of our party to speak to the Gilbertson family on the passing of Bernt. There's a strong kinship one feels with a member who also lived on an island, as one from Manitoulin can say. As I looked over Mr Gilbertson's write-up in the Sault Star, I noticed that he had many of the traits that I see in my communities and the small communities of the North Shore of Manitoulin Island and indeed in most of Algoma.

He came as a person with nothing. He built a business. He worked hard. He served his community, he served his hospitals, he served the board of education. Not knowing him but having heard many things about him from people in my area, I just can sense that he was not one who thought that was anything out of the ordinary; it was just something you did. He's typical, in many ways, of the people that I represent and that many of us represent here in the Legislature in that this strong sense of community was something you just did.

He built—and I think the most famous thing, and it's been alluded to already—the maple syrup business. It is absolutely famous along the North Shore and in Sault Ste Marie. I would invite people to go up and tour that facility. It is magnificent. You will enjoy the syrup. This was all started by a young man who came to Canada, I believe, when he was eight years old. I think that speaks to itself.

He came to this Legislature to serve the people. He knew who he served: He served the people of Algoma. He did some remarkable things. He's spoken of the bridge. The bridge, to someone on an island, is extraordinarily important. I think that the naming of that bridge after Mr Gilbertson will be a tribute that his family can look to for years and generations to come.

So on behalf of the Liberal Party, my leader Lyn McLeod and the people in the adjoining constituency of Algoma-Manitoulin, I'd like to express our deep sympathy to the Gilbertson family.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would like to thank all honourable members for their input, and I will see that a copy of Hansard is sent to the members of the family.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from South Africa, headed by Dr Anne Van Der Spey. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Yesterday, the leader of the official opposition (Mrs McLeod) rose on a point of order with respect to the failure of the Minister of Community and Social Services to provide her and other members with certain documentation. The

member will know that the Speaker has no authority to compel the minister to provide such materials. However, the member may wish to make an inquiry on the subject during oral question period.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): May I ask the following point of order? My request was to ask you to review whether or not the minister had misled the House, not to ask him to produce the budget.

ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): On Wednesday and Thursday of last week, the member for Renfrew North (Mr Conway) raised some concerns respecting the events of Wednesday, September 27, as well as other matters relating to the security of the legislative precinct. Several members spoke to this on that same day and on successive days, namely, the member for Windsor-Riverside (Mr Cooke), the member for St Catharines (Mr Bradley), the member for Wilson Heights (Mr Kwinter), and the government House leader (Mr Eves).

I have now had an opportunity to review the circumstances of the day in question, and I must say that some of the occurrences caused me grave concern. In reviewing the situation, I have found that indeed the honourable member for Renfrew North and other members were, for a time, denied access to the Legislative Building. This was a very serious incident and not one which should be repeated.

The issue of security in this place is a challenging one. The events of last week did not develop out of a deliberate intent to obstruct any member in the performance of his or her duty but rather out of caution and a desire to ensure the safety of members, staff and public. It may be that it should have been handled differently and it is this issue that I would like to address.

Members will know that under subsection 103(2) of the Legislative Assembly Act the Speaker is responsible for establishing security guidelines for the legislative precinct. This is an onerous responsibility and not one which can be fulfilled in the absence of full consultation with you, the members of this House.

In order to ensure that consultation, pursuant to standing order 106(i), I intend to refer the matter of security in the parliamentary precinct to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. It is my hope that consideration of the relevant security issues by this committee will assist me to meet my obligation to establish clear guidelines that will ensure the safety of the occupants of this precinct without impeding the access of members to this chamber.

I thank the member for Renfrew North and other members for bringing these very important concerns to my attention.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, just one question, if I might—and I appreciate your statement today and the fact that you are yourself referring this matter to the Legislative Assembly committee.

I assume the commitment from the government House leader still stands, that a motion will be brought before the assembly that will refer other items around security and what happened on that particular day to the Legislative Assembly committee.

My question, though, is that there were certainly quotes in the press from the Sergeant at Arms that a report was being done for him to you on the incidents around the throne speech day that would outline some of the problems and what led to them. I'm wondering if your statement today is a result of that report, and if that is the case, whether that report would either be tabled in the House or shared with the House leaders of the three parties, because I, for one, would like to see the report and I think, as members, we would be entitled to that.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Mr Speaker, I appreciate your response today.

When I raised this matter about a week ago, I asked specifically as to who gave the order that members of the assembly would not be granted access to this building. While I listened very carefully to your response this afternoon, I can only conclude that either you gave the order, which I do not believe to be the case, or that someone in your name gave the order. As I understand the practices of this place, the only person who would be in a position to give that order would the Sergeant at Arms. Now, if my good friend Thomas Stelling did not give the order, I would still, before this process is concluded, like to know.

I recognize the difficulty of the day; I appreciate the really tough situation with which the security forces were faced on that day, Wednesday of last week. But I really would like to know who did give the order, on what authority and, notwithstanding the difficulty of the moment that day, I'd like some assurance that for whatever inadvertence, confusion, misdirection, misjudgement that might have caused that order to have been given and applied to honourable members on that day last week, that particular difficulty will be addressed in whatever reference under your very capable leadership.

The Speaker: I thank the honourable members for their questions. It's not my duty to answer questions in the Legislature, but I will be happy to make the contents of that full report known when I attend upon the legislative committee when they're dealing with that issue.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to inform this House that our government is proclaiming today as World Teachers' Day in Ontario. We are extremely pleased to support UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which has designated this day as World Teachers' Day to recognize the hard work and vital role undertaken by teachers. Education is the soul of a society, and teachers are the custodians of a very important trust.

On this special occasion, I am also pleased to acknowledge and recognize the presence today in our chambers of M. Robert, who as president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation is here representing the teachers of our province.

By declaring this to be World Teachers' Day in Ontario we show our deep appreciation for the dedication of Ontario's classroom teachers who, by working with students, parents and others in the broader community, daily demonstrate their commitment to help bring about a brighter future for our citizens.

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I was certainly looking forward to hearing a statement from the Minister of Education today that might reflect a little bit more about the educational agenda of this province, but I at this point would just like to follow up on what my colleague had to say yesterday in terms of, yes, this being the United Nations' World Teachers' Day, and of course yesterday he indicated that the teachers of Ontario really deserve this special honour and deserve this day dedicated to them. I could not agree more with that.

As some members of the House will know, I have been honoured by being appointed a judge of a very important selection in the province; of course, that's selecting teachers of the year from across the province. That is an honour that I take very seriously.

When we go to select those teachers of the year, we have applicants who come from across the province. I must say, in this past selection, this past year, in this contest put on by both OISE, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and the Toronto Sun, we had some 1,200 nominations of very dedicated people from across this province. As I went through those very dedicated nominees and took a look at what they did and their commitment to education in this province, I cannot tell you what a difficult task it was to select those 10 teachers who have made a contribution, as teachers around the world have.

Mr Speaker, you will know as well that I as a teacher on leave, and more importantly teachers in the classroom today, respect this day to observe some of the very fine things that are going on in education. I must go back to the days of old where I attended a one-room school house, the old No. 4 school on the Redditt Road, and think of the dedication that was in that one-room school house, the dedication that came through teachers who taught me as I went up through the ranks in the Kenora Board of Education, and I think of that dedication that was extended to the students around me as well.

But education has come a long way since then. I talk of the No. 4 school, a one-room school house; it's actually a school today with a gymnasium. But we cannot just give credit to the bricks and mortar of the institutions that have been built around us; we must give the credit to those who are most deserving, the teachers.

As I travel across the province, I do hear some concern about this minister, a minister who came out in one of his major announcements that he was going to create a crisis in education. I observe those very true concerns of the people, the people I say we are dedicating this day to, the people on the front line. I must say to the minister that he must note the true value of these teachers and not just address them as a special interest in this very important institution of ours in education.

Again, Minister, I think you must act as an advocate on behalf of education in this province. It truly, truly discomforts me to know that you're a minister who began with a statement such as that of developing a crisis in education. I call upon you as the Minister of Education to work with the people you have dedicated this day to and work very closely with them.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to congratulate the Minister of Education and Training on his announcement of proclamation of October 5 in Ontario as World Teachers' Day in this province. One wag suggested that I should ask the minister if this was a real proclamation or one that he has just invented.

I want to say though that we all recognize that teachers are in fact the front-line service providers in education and that they do deserve recognition. As a member of the teaching profession, I guess I should declare a conflict of interest here, but I would say that all of us in this House, whatever our chosen vocation, will be able to remember one or more teachers in our school days who influenced us deeply. In most cases, I would expect that that has been a very positive influence, someone who has helped us to achieve and to understand and to become a better person. For that reason, all of us, individually and collectively, understand the importance of the teaching profession in our communities.

At a time of restraint when we are expecting to see cuts, it is even more difficult for the teachers of the province to carry out their very important role and mandate on behalf of the students of the province. So I would hope that the minister would take that into account as he gets advice from many different directions.

I know that there have even been ruminations about the virtual school and whether or not we need to have students in classrooms, whether we can perhaps, through technologies, have a situation going into the 21st century where eventually we may in fact have students learning at home and not needing to attend a school.

I hope as you look at those kinds of things, Minister, that you will understand the very important relationship between the instructor and the student and among the students, and that as we come to understand the need to adapt to the new technologies in the information age, there is nothing that can replace the teacher in education. As the royal commission indicated, the most important educational tool that we have is a good, dedicated teacher.

1410

I want to join with all members of the House to recognize the role and importance of teachers in Ontario and indeed around the world and to congratulate Mr Robert on behalf of the Ontario Teachers' Federation for not only their work for teachers and for education in Ontario but the international role that they carry out.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation, through its international assistance program, supports teachers from developing countries in the practice of their profession. The financial support that the OTF is able to send enables teachers overseas to buy whole school sets of textbooks, supports teacher education programs in teachers' home countries and makes it possible for teachers to study overseas.

Ontario teachers recognize the importance of their role here, but also their obligation to serve and to assist education throughout the world. I congratulate the government for joining with UNESCO in recognizing World Teachers' Day and thank the minister for acting in this regard.

ORAL QUESTIONS HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Minister of Health, who is just about to resume his seat. Minister, for two days in a row now in this Legislature you have been asked whether you are considering cuts of 10% to even 20% to the hospital budgets across this province. You have consistently, over those two days, refused to deny that you are considering cuts of that magnitude. We understand that a cut of 20% to hospital budgets is a cut of about \$1.4 billion. Will you confirm that you are indeed considering cuts of as much as \$1.4 billion to hospitals across this province?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank the honourable member for the question again and would simply say to her that I cannot, will not, confirm that, in terms of it's strictly speculation and the speculation certainly has not come from me or from any other cabinet minister. I don't think it's appropriate to continue to have this debate about speculation and create instability in the sector.

Mrs McLeod: We intend, day after day, to give this minister an opportunity to put an end to the speculation and create some certainty around this issue. The minister is more than willing to respond to our questions by telling us that he's meeting with the chief executive officers of hospitals, who are ready to look at efficiencies and savings. He's talked to us about the importance of restructuring, and on that everyone agrees.

But we're also very much aware that every hospital across this province has been struggling to find the efficiencies, working for a long time to find efficiencies so they can protect health care. We know that every community is trying to come to grips with the need to restructure the health care system so they can meet the health care needs in their particular community.

The pressures on hospitals, I'm sure this minister will agree, are enormous. We've even seen in recent years rural hospitals closing emergency rooms, and that's a concern that this minister has addressed in the past. Yet now this same minister appears to be considering cuts of up to 20% in the budgets of those same hospitals.

Minister, will you at least tell hospitals what it is you are planning to do? Are you going to cut their budgets, and, if so, by how much? End the speculation.

Hon Mr Wilson: Perhaps the speculation comes—and I had a long, long meeting this morning with the Ontario Hospital Association and part of the agenda included this question—from what the opposition's reaction is or will be to some of these hospital restructurings. I said there are 26 that are coming in very soon from around the province.

My question would be, to the honourable member, if money is saved through those hospital restructurings and we reinvest that in long-term care, for example, outside of the hospital budget, would she and her party consider that a cut or a better use of resources that aren't needed on one side of the ledger and are needed on the long-term-care side? So this is the discussion we had with the OHA. I'd be interested to note what her party's position is about reinvesting money in the health care envelope, as we promised the people of Ontario we would do.

Mrs McLeod: I would remind the minister that he is now responsible for ensuring the delivery of health care in the province of Ontario. He has the responsibilities of serving as a member of the government and it is for him to answer the question that is in the minds of hospital administrators, people who are concerned about health care across this province right now.

I say to this minister, you cannot restructure, you cannot bring about efficiencies, you cannot do any planning at all unless you know with certainty what your budgets are going to be.

I will not respond to his question to me, but I will indeed put the question directly back to the minister in a way in which he could end the uncertainty with a simple yes-or-no answer. He could give the hospitals the certainty they need. So I ask him today: Will you commit to freezing hospital budgets at last year's levels so that hospitals can then reinvest the savings they may find to ensure they are providing health care in their own communities? Will you commit to that?

Hon Mr Wilson: With some of the reinvestment initiatives that we're planning, that we're discussing right now with provider groups and front-line workers and administrators, it's very difficult to say exactly a specific answer to that question, because we're talking to hospitals. I had a meeting with the OHA today exactly about this, and we're continuing to consult.

As I said, there's some confusion out there about money that's saved, and unfortunately the previous government that launched all these restructuring studies didn't leave us a blueprint, by any stretch of the imagination, of what we're supposed to do with all these studies now that they're landing on my desk and district health council desks.

So we're having these discussions with our partners, with the hospitals themselves. At the end of the day there will be money saved, I guess, in some of these restructuring studies, and we'll want to reinvest that into things like long-term care. Those are the discussions we're having right now with the hospital sector.

Mrs McLeod: I will clearly take that as a no; the minister will not commit to flat-lining the budgets of hospitals across the province. We simply need to know now how great the cut will be.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I will address my second question to the Premier. I understand that the Premier has said he is going to drop by a food bank to make a donation on his way home from work before Thanksgiving weekend. But I did want to remind the Premier of another food program that he's shown a great deal of interest in in the past, and that's a province-

wide breakfast program, something which this Premier has championed for years.

About a month ago the member for Windsor-Sandwich, who is our critic for children's services, reminded the Premier of his commitment to establish a province-wide breakfast program and of his conviction that that kind of a program could and should be started immediately. In fact, I think the now Premier has said it could begin tomorrow.

When my colleague reminded the Premier of that commitment, he indicated that if she wanted a breakfast program in her community she should go ahead and set one up. So I would like to ask you, Premier, whether you were indeed serious when you made that comment to our member, that if a Liberal member wants a breakfast program in her community she should set it up herself, even though it was a commitment which you made and even though in the past, I recall, you said this would take leadership from the Premier himself.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Let me say to the leader of the official opposition, with comments to the food bank, that I believe this is going to be a very difficult time for a lot of people in Ontario. Quite clearly, as we have had to reduce because of a \$10-billion deficit—because of the fact that if we do nothing somebody else is going to come in and tell us to cut it all out; we're going to lose this great province of ours and the ability to be compassionate—we've had to make some very difficult decisions. There are restructurings that are taking place.

I have dropped off some food. We'll be dropping off more, both here and in my riding of North Bay. I would encourage all members and neighbours and churches and communities to be compassionate at a very difficult time for many people.

Specifically regarding nutrition programs, the leader of the official opposition will know that in the throne speech we made reference to the fact that to get programs running everywhere and to try to ensure that every school child has the opportunity, whether it's breakfast or throughout the day, to have proper nutrition, I think it is going to take more than individual effort.

I welcome the participation of the member for Windsor-Sandwich. I hope she will work with the parliamentary assistant who we're asking to coordinate on behalf of my office. I would ask the leader of the official opposition and I would ask the leader of the New Democratic Party and all members; I don't see why we cannot have 130 ambassadors for nutrition programs in every riding of this province.

1420

Mrs McLeod: That seems to me to be a rather long way from the ringing commitment that the Premier made as an opposition leader in calling for this breakfast program to be established and for the Premier of the day to take leadership on the issue.

Nevertheless, I say to the Premier that when he directed the member for Windsor-Sandwich to set up a breakfast program in her own community if she wanted to, she took it very seriously indeed. In fact our critic for

children's services has now contacted every school board in the province, indicating that she had been directed by this Premier to set up a school breakfast program in her community. She wanted to find out what already exists, what's working and what's needed. She's been in touch with community groups and she's been in touch with corporations to talk to them about their ideas for breakfast programs and what they would be willing to do to help. Through her work, Premier, she has identified an action plan for moving forward on your promise.

In opposition, you asked for the green light to go out on behalf of the Legislature in a non-partisan way to coordinate the program. Since you don't appear to be making this program a priority any longer, I'm asking you today to give my colleague the green light to start work on this project on a province-wide basis. Will you direct the Minister of Community and Social Services to work with my colleague in fulfilling your promise?

Hon Mr Harris: I think the leader of the official opposition, and I'm sure all members of the House, would know that over the last period of time there has been success story after success story. In Kitchener-Waterloo the Minister of Labour has been active over a period of time in coordinating a number of programs there. In Grey the member has been instrumental in nutrition programs.

Let me congratulate the member for Windsor-Sandwich; exactly the kind of spirit we need from all of us to coordinate—

Applause.

Hon Mr Harris: —and I do congratulate her—in the private sector, and examples that she found out.

Let me say that I think there are blueprints and there are models. The member for Grey-Owen Sound has shared those with previous members of the Legislature on what's been done in Grey. We would encourage people to do that. I hope the member for Windsor-Sandwich will work with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Durham-York, who already has been meeting with corporations. We have had a surprising number of calls, in fact in the millions of dollars' range, from the private sector that we need to follow up on, that they would like to be involved in. This is indeed the Ontario, the Canadian, the community spirit way.

The member will know that I had always said it isn't the ministry, it isn't government dollars, it is the commitment and the will of the Premier using the Premier's office, the Leader of the Opposition using her office, the leader of the New Democratic Party using his office and 130 of us using our offices. It's starting to work, and I congratulate the member for Windsor-Sandwich.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I've discovered a number of important items that our Premier must have overlooked in his five years as superman of nutrition programs in Ontario. There's been no needs assessment across Ontario to determine what criteria should be included for such a program. No one knows exactly how many programs even exist, including our Premier, and how they operate. Current startup fundings for such programs do not even identify common criteria.

From my discussions with corporate leaders interested in youth, like Kellogg's, like Toronto Raptors, and service providers, I believe there is an overwhelming desire to participate in a process that will determine exactly what that program should be. Do I have the Premier's word that he will assist in this development and follow through with, quote, leadership from his office to implement such a program with little or no taxpayers' dollars?

Hon Mr Harris: Let me first of all say this: Nobody is superman in this province, nobody is superperson, nobody has a lock on compassion. What is required is indeed a coordinated community spirit, an effort from all members.

I want to say very directly that my pushing and promoting in opposition the Premier to use his office I believe was in the exact spirit, I think, of the question that's being asked by the member from Windsor-Sandwich. I accept. I will put my office, my name, my parliamentary assistant taking the lead, front and centre, and we'll do everything we can to assist, to coordinate, to get dollars, to get the private sector involved.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Harris: Contrary to the interjections by some other members, let me congratulate the member for Windsor-Sandwich. I think this is a great non-partisan issue. If the other members opposite wish to join in I hope that they will, because I offered this as leader of the third party in a non-partisan way and I offer it now as Premier in a non-partisan way as one of 130 of us. Let's all come together and make sure that every child attending school has the nutrition they need.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Since Bill 40 was passed Ontario has experienced an unprecedented era of labour peace—an unprecedented era of labour peace. That hasn't always been the case. In fact last evening many of the television news programs were showing clips of violence that has occurred on picket lines before Bill 40, and it should surprise no one that from time to time there will be confrontation when workers on strike see someone breaking their picket line and going in and virtually taking their job away from them.

Minister, my question to you is, do you support strikebreakers?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): To the member opposite, I would simply indicate that what happened yesterday is that we repealed the provisions of Bill 40 that were put in place by your government, so now the ban on replacement workers is gone.

Mr Christopherson: I'm not sure I got an answer to the question, Minister, but I'll push forward.

In your statements yesterday, Minister, you talked a lot about workplace democracy, yet when workers go on strike they make a democratic decision by majority vote to go on strike. When someone has voted to give up their paycheque, when many of them are living paycheque to paycheque to support their bargaining committee during the negotiations, when through the secret ballot they've had with the union they have decided through a democratic process to go on strike, why have you decided to ignore their democratic decisions, to ignore the maintenance of labour peace in this province, and why are you not continuing to outlaw strikebreakers?

Hon Mrs Witmer: What we are doing in the legislation we introduced yesterday is to encourage job creation in this province. At the same time, we have introduced democracy measures that are going to enhance the rights of the individual employee. We are going to give all employees information and give them the opportunity prior to any certification to exercise their rights through means of a secret ballot vote. Yes, we're also going to let them vote and determine whether they want to go on strike, whether to ratify a contract and whether to decertify.

I would indicate to you that this bill is going to encourage job creation and will be a benefit to all workers in this province.

1430

Mr Christopherson: Obviously this minister is ashamed of that part of the bill because she refuses to talk about the fact that she is going to make legal again in this province the use of strikebreakers. That has been my question to you, Minister. You've refused to deal with it.

I'm asking you once again, as I did yesterday: You mentioned what you're going to do about Bill 40 in the Common Sense Revolution to the extent of 67 words, yet you've introduced a document that runs to 137 pages. We know that even different business groups have different points of view about whether or not you should do this and how quickly you should do it. I ask you again, Minister, will you commit today to ensuring the fullest possible public hearings in the province of Ontario before you ram this bill through?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I appreciate the question, and I would just like to indicate to the member opposite that already, as a result of the introduction of our Bill 7 yesterday, we have received today a letter from the Hudson's Bay Co—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Hon Mrs Witmer: —indicating that they are proceeding with a plan over the next 12 months to renovate, expand and construct new stores in the amount of \$284 million. This will create—

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): I hope you are right. Do you have the book—

The Speaker: Order. The member for Lake Nipigon has continuously been out of order, and I will not warn him again.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The introduction of this bill yesterday is getting this province back to work. This is creating 10,000 jobs for construction workers, and the indication here is that there will be over 4,000 people hired for new jobs. Our introduction of Bill 7 yesterday means new job creation for people in this province and a better quality of life for those who don't have jobs.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, yesterday you described a meeting you attended this past Monday, and in doing so you gave the distinct impression that the meeting was held to discuss efficiency in the system that supports abused women. Minister, the organizers of that meeting say you grossly misrepresented it. In fact, Vivien Green of Metro's Women Abuse Protocol Project writes, "I am appalled at how the minister has attempted to use the workshop to justify her government's cuts to services and support for abused women." Minister, would you explain for Ms Green and all the other women of Ontario how you view your role in cabinet as minister responsible for women's issues?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, with responsibility for Women's Issues): I too spoke to Vivien Green today. We had a discussion about the comments that are around the province of Ontario. I clearly stated yesterday that I learned a lot in the few moments I was there—it's never long enough in this job—that we need to coordinate our services in the province of Ontario when it comes to initiatives to prevent violence against women. I did not distort that in the House yesterday. I've read my comments, I discussed them with her, and I think she was in agreement with me.

I will also state that I said yesterday in this House that we have a tremendous responsibility—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Hamilton East is not in his own chair.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: —in this government to continue to support the core services for women, and the transition homes agree with that. If they had a priority, it would in fact be to support the core services for women.

I should also state that we do not have the money to be able to add any new core funding for additional shelters, and that's a reality for us. It was also a reality for Mr Silipo, who was the Minister of Community and Social Services in November 1994. We have the same position. We both agree we have challenges, and I think you would agree with that as well.

Ms Churley: Based on my conversation with Ms Green, I believe the minister will be receiving another letter from her as a result of that answer. That meeting was set up six months ago, and you came in and spoke very briefly at the beginning.

However, let me ask you another question, Minister. Would you explain to the House the purpose of second-stage shelter for abused women and their children?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I will take it that you also understand that second-stage housing is a support for women who, after a period of time, usually six weeks, move into this special kind of housing, which was developed in the last five or six years. It's a program that we support. We will not be cutting any of the core funding to that second-stage housing. We will continue to support counselling services to the tune of \$15.8 million—all of us in this House should know that—to

women, and their children, who have been victims of family violence in their own homes and other places.

I would implore that all members of this House understand that these times are different, that all of us are going to have to work in our own communities, as the women stated on Monday morning at the meeting I attended, the coordinating groups. Most of us have some coordinating groups in our community. I implore everyone to get out there and help us because this is a time when women do need help, and all of us have a responsibility in representing them to make sure it takes place.

Ms Churley: Second-stage housing is more than a roof over one's head; it is a secure environment where women and children are able to access counselling services and other necessary supports.

Yesterday you went to great pains to assure this House and women in need that the housing would still exist. Minister, can you tell the House how second-stage housing will continue to operate without staff—because you said yesterday the housing would still be there—without counselling services, without proper security—after all, these are battered women—and procedures?

Minister, given all that your government has done in less than four months to harm women in this province, I would like to know if you see any point in continuing in your role as minister responsible for women's issues. Are you going to start speaking up for women, or are you there simply to justify this bad news to them and continue to tell women who are victims of violence—

The Speaker: The question's been asked.

Ms Churley: —to get off their duffs and start taking more responsibility for themselves? Minister, when are you going to start speaking up for women?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I don't think there's anyone in this province or this House who doesn't know that the province of Ontario is facing tremendous challenges with regard to balancing our budget, creating an environment for investment so that women can become independent, so that women who are battered can leave their homes and have jobs and support themselves. In order to do that we have to have an investment in our economy.

We should also know that with these budget cuts—and we're looking at 10% and 20% budget cuts—in the area of violence against women we have taken a 2.5% cut and we are protecting programs to the tune of over \$100 million to support 98 emergency shelters, core services in second-stage housing, \$15.7 million for the counselling programs, and I could go on, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: The member knows this, and I think it's her responsibility to go out there and do a better job with the money that we have saved and that we will protect to support women.

1440

HOMOLKA CASE

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): I have previously risen in the House to ask the Attorney General a question with respect to the Homolka affair. I'd like to return to that topic for a moment, since the minister did

not given us any effective answer last time; we'll try again this time.

Mr Minister, the Homolka case has caused great concern across this province. In the last week or so, since we've been in the House, we've received petitions virtually every day from the public asking you to review the case, as indeed we asked you to review the case at the beginning of this House.

Today, some 300,000 names were delivered to the Legislature by private citizens who, of their own volition and with their own free time and effort, gathered these from every corner of Ontario and indeed even across Canada.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Ms Castrilli: Mr Minister, I ask you, in the face of this growing concern and in the face of the fact that you risk jeopardizing the institution of justice in this province, will you call for a review at this time?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, with responsibility for Native Affairs): As I tried to indicate to the member when she asked the same question a week ago, the issue that you wish to put to review is an issue that consists of a piece of evidence that's before a court, and the trial is still going on.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): You never accepted that when you were over here.

Hon Mr Harnick: The member from Windsor says I never accepted that. I think he should speak to his colleague the former Attorney General and she might explain this to him.

This is not an issue to make political, quite frankly, but the fact is that this matter is a piece of evidence before a court at this moment. The trial isn't finished. The sentencing is only beginning. There is an appeal coming, and for that reason I cannot commit to doing what you want to do.

I have indicated that I will be, as a member of the government, prepared to make a detailed statement, at the appropriate time, so that people understand exactly what this issue is all about, but I cannot and will not do it when it will prejudice the fair trial and completion of this matter.

Ms Castrilli: I'm absolutely appalled at the answer the Attorney General dares to give to this House. You know full well, sir, that the sentencing of Miss Homolka has nothing to do with the sentencing of Mr Bernardo, and any appeal will only deal with what's in evidence right now—no new evidence; not Karla Homolka. The fact is that the people of Ontario require you to call an inquiry. Will you give such a commitment to the House and stop stalling us?

Hon Mr Harnick: I would very much regret if this particular case went off the rails because politicians tainted the evidence by calling it into question at a time when a court is weighing that very evidence. You, as a lawyer, more than most people in this place, should know and respect that. Accordingly, this is not an issue that I, as Attorney General, will take into the political realm. It should not be there.

The Speaker: New question, member of the third party. The member for Algoma.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Question period is in rotation. It goes from the official opposition to the third party.

Mr Wildman: I apologize to my friend across the way.

EDUCATION FINANCING

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. Could the minister explain to the House the methodology that he and his ministry are using for determining the actual expenditures on classroom teaching, classroom education, as opposed to expenditures by boards for administration and governance, as per the document the government ran on?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): The honourable member should be informed that there is in the ministry a working group on education finance reform that is now investigating that very question, working with the federations, who will be giving me a report later this year.

Mr Wildman: I thank the minister for his response, but I find it a little puzzling that he would say they are now investigating how to do this when he already announced a cut this summer, assuring the people of Ontario that it would not affect classroom education.

Is the minister aware that Mr Drew Nameth, from his ministry, sent a memo to all superintendents of business of boards of education and separate school boards across the province in which he said that the ministry wished to have data from the boards by September 15 that would make it possible for them to identify the expenditures in classrooms as opposed to administration, but that in the memo Mr Nameth says, "In many cases the data are not compatible with the information required for this costing framework and the ministry has had to make a number of assumptions in prorating and otherwise manipulating the data to provide the best guess in time and resources available to the ministry"?

Surely the ministry and the government are not going to make decisions on funding based on guesstimates and data which are inappropriate and that need to be manipulated.

Hon Mr Snobelen: I'm pleased that the honourable member notes that members of the Ministry of Education and Training staff are now working with boards of education in determining exactly what the costs are for in-classroom and what the costs are for administration. It's the goal of our government to spend money in the classroom, not in the boardroom, and we're making every effort in that regard.

REVIEW OF HOSPITALS

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Minister of Health. There have been many upsetting reports of late that the Henderson hospital on Hamilton Mountain, the only hospital in the riding, is slated for closure. I'm wondering if the minister would

please clear up this situation for all the concerned residents of Hamilton Mountain.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for asking a question that I know is on the minds of his constituents. This issue, this rumour, this speculation, was first brought to my attention through the media when the member across the way from Hamilton East said he could absolutely confirm that the Henderson hospital was to close.

I want to say to all members of this House today that there is a restructuring study going on in the Hamilton area. The NDP let that study at some \$2 million. It won't report until about the middle of next year, and certainly I have no indication—no one has any indication—that Henderson hospital will close. In fact, somebody very close to the study, Susan Goodman, executive director of the district health council doing the study, said on September 28 in the Hamilton Spectator that she knew of no list of potential hospital closings. "There has been no discussion about hospital closures at the health council or task force," she said. She goes on to rule out the rumour entirely. I've certainly not heard anything, and I trust that Ms Goodman, who's the executive director of the DHC, would know the exact status of the hospital restructuring in her area.

Mr Pettit: Back to the minister: Will the minister assure the residents of Hamilton Mountain that they will have meaningful input into the future of their hospitals?

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Give us a guarantee.

Hon Mr Wilson: Again, thank you to my colleague from Hamilton Mountain. The purpose of the district health council, of course, is to be the ears, eyes and conscience of the local community. I'd encourage members of this House from that area of the province and their constituents to have meaningful discussions with the district health council, with the task force, in this case, and to make sure they have their say. Those district health councils are not politicians.

Mr Agostino: Give us assurances they won't close.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Hon Mr Wilson: They're made up of people from the community and have been in existence for some 20 years, charged with the responsibility of providing—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. Minister, take your seat, please. The member for Hamilton East is continually out of order, and I will not warn him once more. Minister.

Hon Mr Wilson: May I also say that Henderson hospital has a very, very important research component to its operation, and it's a very crucial component in cancer care in the Hamilton area. I'm confident that the district health council will consider the importance of the services it delivers in their restructuring study.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I have a question this afternoon for the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. Minister, you have very abruptly this week made some major changes in the provincial corrections system without making any announcements about these. This week you gave our halfway houses just a few hours' notice of their demise, forcing over 400 offenders back to jails. We now hear that you're planning on closing anywhere from seven to 17 correctional facilities across the province. Minister, will you confirm today that closing of jails is part of your agenda? Which facilities are you planning to close?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): At the outset I want to correct something the member just said, that we forced 400 people back into jails. That's not correct at all. There were a number of residents of community resource centres who did return to jail, but to suggest that we forced all 400 is totally incorrect.

In respect to the specific question, related to jail closures, we have made no decisions in respect to those kinds of expenditures. We're looking at all expenditures of my ministry, as we are across government, trying to identify core services. We're faced with some very difficult challenges in respect to the financial situation we found ourselves in as a result of the spending practices of the previous two governments.

Mr Ramsay: It appears, Minister, that you have no plan for our correctional facilities at all. There's no consultation going on, and you don't make any announcements when you do make a decision. You're right, they all had to report back to jail. Now many offenders are back on the street, and that's part of this problem. It really appears that the system is in chaos. As you know, there's overcrowding in our facilities from time to time. So if you're planning to close facilities, where are these offenders going to go? What assurances can you give Ontarians that there is a plan for all these changes and that our communities are going to remain safe?

Hon Mr Runciman: I want to say that the number one priority of this government is public safety, not the convenience of lawbreakers. I want to say that in respect to the jail closures, I've heard that rumour; it's been around for years. When I was in opposition, sitting across the aisle, the same facts were being circulated. Indeed, the NDP government at the time did move to make some closures of some of the old jails in the province. In fact, they closed the Perth Jail and Camp Hillsdale, I gather, about a year before the general election. Then, I assume because of the negative reaction of the residents of those ridings, both held by Conservative members, no further action was taken.

Those lists were developed, I understand, as a result of recommendations made by the Provincial Auditor in 1993 indicating that Ontario's incarceration costs are the highest in Canada. But I'm indicating to you, I'm indicating to all members of the House today—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: —that we are reviewing all operations of my ministry. We have made no decisions in respect to jail closures. I will commit to communicating with the member and others if indeed we move in that direction—

The Speaker: Conclude your answer, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: —prior to any decisions being taken.

CLOSURE OF HALFWAY HOUSES

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): My question is also to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. Today the minister repeated what he said yesterday, that his primary concern in closing community resource centres was the issue of public safety. He made a comment that the public wasn't as safe when people were in community resource centres because he had "no indication really of what they're doing while they're out there."

Would the minister please tell us how an electronic bracelet around someone's ankle is going to tell the minister and the staff in the Ministry of Correctional Services what they're doing out there when they're on that surveillance?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): As I've indicated in the House previously, electronic monitoring is going to give us 24-hour surveillance, if you will, of individuals out on temporary absences, extended TAs out in the community. Again, in terms of safety of the public, it's going to be a much safer system in respect to the criteria we've developed.

The fact is that anyone applying, and this is purely a voluntary program—I want to stress that again: a purely voluntary program. We will be monitoring their time out in the community in terms of—it'll be a set schedule. If they're at work for eight hours a day, we will know the time they return to the residence. If, indeed, there is a concern—and I don't believe there will be—in respect to the kinds of offenders who will be allowed to go under electronic surveillance, we could consider a monitoring device in a workplace as well. That's a possibility.

We feel quite confident that this system is much superior to the system of halfway houses.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Will you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: At the same time, it is going to save the taxpayers of this province approximately \$9 million annually.

Mrs Boyd: I'm glad that the minister feels that this is going to be safer. Knowledge is a much better thing than feeling about something that concerns public safety.

Last night, on CBC Radio's As It Happens, we heard about the experiment in Holland around this where they started very slowly, in fact, with two very, very carefully screened prisoners on electronic monitors, and they had a 50% success rate. One of those people was monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and was conducting a very lucrative drug trade because there was no way for the bracelet to tell anybody what he was doing, only where he was. Similarly, if people have been convicted of abuse of their families and they go back home, they're in their home, are they abusing their families?

It is very clear from the Dutch experiment and from the comments of the director of that experiment that without counselling, without a clear understanding of what people are doing, not just where they are from time to time, that this won't work.

The Speaker: The question, please.

Mrs Boyd: We have a minister here who has leapt off a cliff, has closed down successful programs that got people working, got them independent in the community, for a chimera, for a possible experiment that might start in January.

The Speaker: Would the member please put her question?

Mrs Boyd: I ask the minister, again, when he's closing jails, starting road gangs, cutting the allowance of convicts and closing community resource centres, and thinks in January there might be an electronic bracelet program, where is public—

The Speaker: Take your seat, please. You've been two minutes.

Hon Mr Runciman: Perhaps the member should go and talk to her NDP colleagues in British Columbia and Saskatchewan who've been running electronic monitoring programs for some time in a very successful way.

I don't want to get into specifics, because there are some legal matters pending before the Court of Appeal with respect to decisions, court matters related to issues that I can't talk about here in this House but that also have relevance with respect to the operation of halfway houses and how effective or ineffective they've been in respect to the monitoring of residents of those halfway houses—some very, very significant concerns. For her to suggest that electronic monitoring is going to be less efficient than halfway houses simply doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

I want to put on the record a quote from Mr Duncan Gillespie, a director of the John Howard Society. Mr Gillespie says: "There's nothing you're going to be able to do with inmates in six weeks or 12 weeks in a halfway house that's going to reduce risk. So either let them out now or keep them in. We're spending \$10 million to \$12 million a year to put them in there. It didn't make any sense." That's from a director of the John Howard Society.

We're doing what's right for public safety and we're doing what's right for the taxpayers of this province.

The Speaker: New question. The member for Etobicoke West.

Applause.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): Thank you. That's the second time in my life the NDP and Liberals ever applauded for me. I won't tell you the first time.

1500

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): My question is to the Attorney General. I am in receipt of the 300,000 names on the petition that were collected around the province by some petition organizers and workers. Let me just name them because I think they've done an outstanding job: Gillian Roediger, Maria Giuliette, Shirlie Eden, Gwen Hunter, Carolyn Iannoni, Cathy Johnston, Fiona Stewart and Rodney Elesie.

I just wanted to say, Attorney General, I understand your response to the first question and the question last week. I would like to pursue this on another level. We understand this case is still before the courts and I understand there could be appeals. I also understand that there are sentencing procedures to go through and I understand you can't comment on that.

What I would like to ask you is, with your knowledge of the system and the legal processes in this province, how long could this be in fact before the courts before you could potentially be able to comment on it? I guess I'm looking at an outside date to see how long it could be before the people of the province have an opportunity to see whether or not you consider a review necessary.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, with responsibility for Native Affairs): I thank the member for the question and advise that of course I'm aware of the public's concern over this matter and, as well, the concern of every member in this Legislature, and the question is a good one. I have indicated that I will, on behalf of the government, make a full and detailed statement at the appropriate time.

The issue is, as the member points out, when will that appropriate time be? It may be that the appropriate time will be once the sentencing of the matter is completed, if the matter of the appeal does not involve questioning those sensitive pieces of evidence. So if those sensitive pieces of evidence are not an issue before the Court of Appeal, it may well be that we can deal with this as soon as the actual sentencing and trial are over. If those issues continue to be issues before the Court of Appeal, that will make it more difficult and prolong the period of time before a public statement can be made.

But I hope and I tell the member that I will make that statement a full and detailed public statement as soon as I possibly can without jeopardizing the trial of this action.

Mr Stockwell: I appreciate the response from the Attorney General, but the rub for the public is this: The legal process is very time-consuming, and obviously a fair process for all concerned. But the concern that I hear from people around this province is this: Our process can sometimes become so protracted, and this evidence could be used in further cases against Mr Bernardo, that the fear the public has—and it's a real fear, I might add—is that we will be caught up in the judicial process to such a grave and utmost degree that we won't be able to have the Attorney General go on the record to determine whether or not a review is necessary until, potentially, Karla Homolka may be paroled. That, to me, is not acceptable.

I put it directly to you, Attorney General: Could this happen, and if it is possible, can we look to you to see some action before that kind of thing takes place, to think that Karla Homolka is back on the streets and we're still fiddling around, talking about a review?

Hon Mr Harnick: I say to the member, a very good question. It would be improper for me to comment about issues pertaining to this individual's parole. What I am prepared to say is that at the earliest possible time, a full and public and detailed statement will be made.

I hope that the time period will not be protracted. I would hope that these proceedings will be completed. As I've indicated, the trial is still going on, but once that trial is complete, we will have a better idea of when we can make a statement so that you can have the information that you're asking for.

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SERVICES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a question for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Minister, you've just killed a number of significant programs, including the welcome houses across Ontario which train newcomers for jobs and provide English classes. Yet, just in May of this year your boss, this Premier, stated that, "A Harris government will develop a comprehensive immigration strategy to address the fact that Ontario's settlement and integration facilities are overburdened." The Premier admitted it and he knows it.

Just this morning, when I called your staff, they told me, "Integration facilities used by thousands of arriving immigrants in need will cease to function."

Minister, are you going to make this Premier out to be a liar, or have you discussed it with him in order to develop a comprehensive settlement strategy, or is this simply a slap in the face of immigrants, that they are no longer welcome in Ontario?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): First of all, Mr Speaker, let me start off by offering my congratulations on your appointment, and may I say this: I will make every effort and endeavour to make your task less daunting than the honourable members of the opposition and the third party seem to want to make it.

Since their establishment 22 years ago there has been significant growth in the number and maturity of organizations providing settlement services and language training programs to immigrants and refugees. With this infrastructure now in place, the province can responsibly withdraw from this area of direct service delivery.

Mr Ruprecht: The minister is reading a text. That wasn't the question. Will you develop a comprehensive integration strategy, as promised by your Premier? That was the question, but I'm going on to my next one.

The second promise this Premier made is also in writing. It says, "We will negotiate"—that is your government—"with the federal government to develop a federal-provincial immigration agreement which includes a new funding agreement."

My question to you is this: Did you talk to the federal Minister of Citizenship or the Prime Minister in order to develop this federal-provincial funding arrangement, or have you decided to make the Premier bite the dust again and scapegoat him in beating up on immigrants, who are really trying to become taxpayers of this province? Will you please answer this question? Because I think you're very penny wise and pound foolish.

Hon Ms Mushinski: Let me start off by saying that this government recognizes the importance of immigration settlement needs in this province and indeed we are committed to bringing forward an immigration settlement agreement negotiation process. Once the framework for that process has been developed, I'll be happy to share it with the honourable member.

1510

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. I congratulate her and wish her the best, but would remind her that it isn't just Bay Street that's watching, it's a whole lot of other people who are watching as well.

Madam Minister, I glanced through the Common Sense Revolution just the other day to confirm my original understanding that this document had nothing to say about culture, and it didn't surprise me. But you should know that the Canadian labour force study of 1988 and updates through Statistics Canada indicate that in 1994, in the GTA, arts and cultural industries combined employed more persons than utilities, transportation, manufacturing, business services, finance, insurance and real estate combined. Clearly, arts and culture benefit this province economically and our own cultural identity.

You have recently announced \$32 million cut from Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and half of that was for culture. Minister, the question to you: Have you done an economic impact study that would tell us the effect these cuts would have on cultural workers and the economy in general?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): Thank you for the question, Mr Speaker, to the honourable member. Let me respond by saying that this government does indeed recognize that culture has a significant economic impact on the province, but the Ontario government must ease out of the business of signing blank cheques and get into the business of creating opportunity. We are doing this in partnership with our cultural stakeholders.

Mr Marchese: I say to the minister that she has done, in an unprecedented way, what most ministers have never done in the past. She has not consulted with anyone on these cuts.

I would remind her that culture is a wealth-creating industry. Between 1988 and 1992, in the depth of the recession, the cultural sector in the GTA grew by 9% in employment. The Ontario film investment program, which you chopped completely, and the Ontario Film Development Corp, which you cut in half, have been real success stories.

With a small investment of money by the government, you multiply the economic benefit to society many times over. Every OFIP dollar equals \$8.30 in total film and TV productions activity in Ontario. OFIP-supported projects spent approximately 89% of their total domestic budgets on Ontario goods, services and labour. These budgets generate economic activity across a wide range of sectors.

For a government that is interested in the bottom line, can you explain to the people who are watching the wisdom of these irrational decisions?

Hon Ms Mushinski: Let me again respond to the honourable member that the province is still spending close to a quarter of a billion dollars on culture through

my ministry. I would also like, in response to his question with respect to meeting with the representatives from the cultural community, to say that indeed I have met with all of the representatives and CEOs of all of the cultural agencies under my ministry.

PETITIONS

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have been asked by residents in the Niagara region to present a number of petitions dealing with the issue of the Karla Homolka plea bargain. The member for Etobicoke West will be presenting a large number on behalf of many people as well. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials and employees at the levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

This would be over 1,000 names that would appear in this petition. I know there will be a large number coming in from the member for Etobicoke West.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): I have today some 300,000 names on a petition that I'd like to read into the record. It's clearly the largest petition that I have ever read into the record, or seen read into the record, at least, in my brief stint here. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials and employees at the levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

I have attached my name to this petition as well.

QUEEN STREET MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): This petition comes in conjunction with an announcement to have a demonstration in front of the Minister of Health's office on Monday at 12:30. The petition reads:

"Whereas the PC government is going to open a 20bed forensic facility for the criminally insane at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre; and

"Whereas the nearby community is already home to the highest number of ex-psychiatric patients and social service organizations in hundreds of licensed and unlicensed rooming-houses, group homes and crisis care facilities in all of Canada; and

"Whereas there are existing facilities that could be expanded to assess and treat the criminally insane; and

"Whereas no one was consulted—not the local residents, not the business community, not leaders of com-

munity organizations, not education and child care providers and not even the local members of provincial Parliament;

"We, therefore, the undersigned residents and business owners of our community, urge the PC government of Ontario and the Minister of Health to immediately stop all plans to accommodate the criminally insane in an expanded Queen Street Mental Health Centre until a public consultation process is completed."

I have signed my name to this document.

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): I also have numerous signatures that I'd like to add to my friend from Etobicoke's list. I have 676 signatures, and it's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials and employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

These signatures come from my area.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officers and employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

VEHICLE SAFETY

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I also have a petition with a series of names to present and I attach my signature to this petition:

"A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Reflect your children's future. This is a wake-up call. Transportation trailers can be made safer. We need reflective tape on all transport truck trailers. Make it mandatory; make it law.

"We, the people of Ontario, can make a change. Support the introduction of a bill. Please sign below."

HOMOLKA CASE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This is the same subject but a different petition coming in from a different group of people. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, demand that Karla Homolka's plea bargain be revoked by the Attorney General of Ontario, the Honourable Charles Harnick."

It is signed by a large number of people in the Niagara Peninsula.

VEHICLE SAFETY

Mr Peter North (Elgin): I have a petition here that says:

"Reflect your children's future. This is a wake-up call. Transportation trailers can be made safer. We need reflective tape on all transport truck trailers. Make it mandatory; make it law.

"We, the people of Ontario, can make a change. Support the introduction of a bill."

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I believe the House leader would like to read a statement of the business for next week.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Before we do that, could I ask permission to revert to motions?

The Speaker: That's agreed? Agreed. 1520

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move that when the House adjourns on Wednesday, October 11, 1995, it stand adjourned until 1:30 pm on Monday, October 16, 1995.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of October 9, 1995.

The House will not sit on Monday, October 9, because it is Thanksgiving Day.

On Tuesday, October 10, we will continue with the responses to the speech from the throne. The debate will wrap up with a vote at 6 pm. The parties have agreed that this will be a five-minute bell as opposed to the 30-minute bell in the standing orders.

Wednesday, October 11, will be an opposition day standing in the name of Mrs McLeod.

As per the motion just passed, there is agreement that the House will not sit on Thursday, October 12, for the NDP federal leadership convention, as has been the practice of the Ontario Legislature in the past.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Peter North (Elgin): Mr Speaker, I can't tell you what a pleasure it is for me to be here. It's certainly been a great opportunity for me to participate in yet another House, and it's certainly an opportunity to bring a bit of a different perspective to this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, as you would know, it's been some 61 years, I believe, since an independent member was elected to the Legislature and I can certainly tell you I

get a different perspective as I continue to move around the House here.

I want to thank the people of Elgin for that opportunity to be able to come to this Legislature and participate in all of these debates and participate in changes in government and changes in perspectives in legislation in this province.

I think being elected as an independent has sent a message, and a message to this Legislature as well, and it's a message of change. It talks about representation and it talks about constituency, and I was hoping to see in the throne speech some opportunity of being recognized in that capacity in terms of being able to have some of the rules changed. Hopefully they will be changed to give independent members an opportunity to speak freely in the House. I appreciate this opportunity to have these 10 minutes today to speak as well.

I want to, if I can, tell all members of the Legislature that I don't believe it's my job to be here just in opposition, just simply to oppose. I don't intend to take that tack and I think my constituents don't want me to take that tack. I think they want me to be here to put forth workable ideas, plans and solutions that will give the government the information it needs from the constituents of Elgin county. After all, I believe these people from Elgin county are their constituents, as well as all members of the House.

I want to, if I can, just touch on the throne speech, because I know it's a difficult thing to do. I had an opportunity in the past to participate as a member of the cabinet and a member of the government in developing a throne speech and I know it's not an easy thing to do. Lots of times throne speeches will seem to be or appear to be somewhat disjointed, because people are trying to put as much information into one as they can. Lots of times it's the things that aren't in the throne speech that concern you the most.

I see when I look at this throne speech a group of people who are a new government who are asking for understanding.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Could we ask that we have some of our colleagues a little quieter, because we're having problems hearing over in this corner of the House and I'd like to hear the member's remarks.

Mr North: Then I can continue, Mr Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Please continue.

Mr North: I appreciate your understanding.

I want, if I can, just to speak to the throne speech because I think there are certainly a number of different perspectives in it that need to be addressed. As you look through it, you can see that the government is trying to move ahead. They're trying to move ahead with an agenda that they put forth to the people of the province and that they banked on and that they won on, and I think that's reasonable to do.

But what concerns me is the speed more than anything. I think that is an appropriate concern and I think it's a concern that I pass on from the members of my constitu-

ency. They see a lot of action in a very short time and they're concerned about the thought process. They look at it and they ask themselves—it's not so much a concern about substance as it is about style, and the style has to do with the speed.

It's very difficult as a young government to govern. It's very difficult to bring issues forward, and it's always controversial. It's always difficult to move things ahead, and change is much more difficult than anything else. So I think they're asking for, and we're trying to give, some sense of understanding.

When I look at some of the issues that are in the throne speech, I concern myself with certain items, and the first that I'll speak to is the item of workfare, the item of the diminishing of a certain allowance for people out there who need that support. I can understand that the government feels strongly that they need to diminish those dollars in order to get the house in order, so to speak. But again, I ask them to look very carefully on the effect as a result of the cause.

It's important that they understand that if people can come forward with logical solutions, with logical propositions that will meet them halfway or that can help in some way to bring the private sector aboard—because my concern is that there's not a bridge. There's not a bridge in this workfare plan; there's not a bridge in this diminishing of opportunities for people and the support for people. There is not a bridge between that aspect and the small business sector.

I look very carefully at home, and we are now pursuing some of those bridges and will be coming to my friend the minister and asking him to look at those as well. Incidentally, at home they're calling the minister Discount Dave now, just for your information.

So they look at welfare reform. They're also looking at another aspect, I might mention, of welfare reform, the issue in rural Ontario, because it seems to be a different issue in rural Ontario. I know many of the members across the House come from rural Ontario and they will share, I think, in this concern. The idea of workfare in rural Ontario has its problems in terms of transportation, in terms of various styles of work wear and in terms of day care etc. I think it's important that we not overlook those issues when we're looking at how to structure anything that has to do with people sort of working for their opportunities to have these services and support.

It also leaves a rather large question, if you're having municipalities deal with the idea of workfare, in terms of what they've presented to me as concerns with regard to workers' comp and how that factors into this process. I think that's a concern you've already heard as Speaker and heard as a member as well.

I want to wrap my speech up here—I didn't have a lot of opportunity to speak today, just 10 minutes—and I want to tie all of what's been done, all of what's in here, including the concerns that have been raised with regard to Bill 40, the concerns that have been raised with regard to the agricultural sector.

I see in here there's some discussion about repealing Bill 91. That's an issue at home, where farmers are saying, "If you feel so strongly about repealing Bill 91, make sure you place the exemption back into the law." They feel very strongly about that and they hope that's not overlooked. If you're to move ahead, the government and farmers, working together to try and come up with something they think is at least reasonable, make sure you do not overlook the exemption, because I think it's vitally important.

In this House, the work we do, the idea of creating jobs and hope, will be based on confidence, and the confidence people get will come out of this House and will come out of constituency offices and the mouths of the members who work here. I think it's vitally important, if you're going to complete the goals that you've set for yourselves, that you look very carefully at what you're doing in terms of confidence. It's vitally important that there's consumer confidence, it's vitally important that there's confidence from the business sector, and it's vitally important that there's confidence from the labour sector. You're going to have to tie it all together. You're not going to be able to do it piecemeal. You're not going to be able to do it in a fashion that is exclusionary. It's vitally important that we build community confidence that we'll see across the board, and that will help ensure the productivity, the jobs and the concerns people are raising and bring them to the forefront.

1530

As I've said, it's sometimes interesting, the things you leave out of a throne speech. There are a couple of things I want to note, which hopefully we'll be bringing in in the future.

The basic bottom line for me has been rural Ontario, and there's not a lot said about rural Ontario in this particular document. Another issue near and dear to my heart is agriculture. The minister has talked at length about the protection of agriculture, and I know he did in opposition as well. I'm hoping to hear a lot more about those protections for agriculture, because it's a huge business in my particular area.

I want to know how he's going to tie the work he's doing into property tax reform and working with Municipal Affairs and Housing. I think it's also very important that we hear from the Housing minister in terms of property tax reform, because I worked in the housing sector and I know that is one of the things that will make this economy rise and be prosperous again.

I'll end simply by saying that I look forward to this opportunity in the House. It will be an interesting opportunity as an independent member, and I hope to be able to work both with the government and with the other parties in this Legislature to do something in the way of bringing issues for Elgin forward and bringing confidence again for the people who live in the communities of Elgin county. I thank you for your time.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the citizens and voters of Hamilton Centre for re-electing me and having faith in the work I've done. I have considered it an honour over these years to represent the people of Hamilton Centre and consider myself very fortunate, in light of the political climate in which we all ran, to have

been re-elected and do thank them most humbly for this opportunity.

I would like also to comment on what has happened to Hamilton as a result of the throne speech, the Common Sense Revolution and the decisions that have been made since the new government has taken power.

Our government, the previous government, made it a priority to ensure that a lot of older communities, such as Sault Ste Marie, Windsor and my own community of Hamilton, received the kind of attention and support they needed at a time when the recession in Ontario was ravaging much of the manufacturing basis that exists across Ontario, and that of course is usually particular to older communities.

We in fact invested—not gave away, but invested—more money in the five years we were in power than any other government in the history of this province, and we did it for very good reason. We made sure we were linking up in partnership with the community when we invested money in jobs and infrastructure so as to strengthen our community and prepare it for the future. In my own community, much credit is due to the regional chairman, Terry Cooke, and Mayor Bob Morrow and their councils for the work they had done in the Renaissance project, in Vision 2020, the very strong leadership they've shown since the outset of the recession in identifying how our community could not only survive through the changes that were taking place, but also to prosper when the good times returned.

Mr Speaker, we did this in many different ways, and I say to you, sir, with great respect, through you to the opposition, that it was extremely disheartening—not because they were our projects, because quite frankly they weren't; they were the community's projects—quite disheartening to see the first decisions coming out of the new government gutting those projects, eliminating those partnerships, eliminating jobs, and lowering the opportunity for our community to survive into the future.

For example, we had an opportunity in the community of Hamilton to be the first United Nations university on environmental studies in North America. We put \$5 million forward on behalf of the government of Ontario and it was ultimately matched by the federal government, as well as local money, both private and public. That would have supported one of the cornerstones of the future of Hamilton; that is, environmental technologies and the application of new environmental technologies in terms of taking an older community that has a history of pollution problems and allowing it to convert that into a green economy that can be successful. This new Tory government killed it. They said that wasn't important.

They also killed a Barton Street renewal project, again the cornerstone of a community plan, supported by the regional council, supported by the city council, to turn Barton Street, in the heart of my riding of Hamilton Centre, into a hub of cultural activity, and, as my colleague said earlier in question period, creating jobs, supporting one of the fastest-growing economic centres in all of Hamilton-Wentworth, and they killed it. Not only did they kill it in terms of money that was already committed and in our budget; they now want that com-

munity group—because it's not run by politicians, it's run by the community itself—they want \$1.1 million back out of the bank account.

This is money that was to be lent and paid back. This was money that was there to rejuvenate an older part of the city. This was a project that was there to provide jobs and to provide hope and encouragement to the future of Hamilton, its downtown core and the people in the cultural and arts community, who were prepared to roll up their sleeves and voluntarily provide the leadership that was needed to make that project work, and this government killed it.

Non-profit housing projects: I realize this government philosophically wants out of the non-profit housing business, but the fact is that there are thousands of workers, particularly construction workers, who wouldn't have had jobs through the worst days of the recession if we weren't building non-profit housing. And that's not just money spent on make-work projects, as some like to pretend it is. That's an investment too. It's an investment in community, it's an investment in people, it's an investment in families. They've killed all of them.

One, in fact, was at the very heart of downtown Hamilton, the Lister Block, which was a major project, in addition to the courthouse we built and the GO Transit centre. Mayor Bob Morrow, much to his credit, was leading the charge to make sure our government paid attention to that particular building, both because of its historical significance and its importance to the economy of downtown Hamilton, and we responded to that need. We were prepared to make sure that building was preserved, that small business was put back into that area, and we would have provided housing in the downtown, which is an integral part of a successful downtown by any study or measure that one can find. This government killed it.

In fact, every decision that this government has made has killed jobs, not created them. They were jobs that would have been good for today and provided the economic stimulation that would have given jobs in the future. Instead, after we go through the hit on the poor, the hit on children, and now it's coming out every day in question period that women are paying the ultimate price—I'm not suggesting that's a conspiracy, but I am suggesting that the projects and programs, the public support policies of this government, have the effect of disproportionately hurting women in this society. I think we'll be able to continue to prove that as the days unfold into this government.

1540

When we ask the government, "What is it you're going to do that's going to create all these jobs?" the answer is, "The tax cut," the 30% tax cut, that this is going to magically provide all the jobs this government promised, some 720,000. The fact is that that's been tried. It's trickle-down economics, that if you give it to the rich, the benefits will trickle down to workers. It's old Reaganomics, it's Thatcherism. It didn't work there; it won't work here.

I'm going to wrap up to allow my colleagues their opportunity. The fact is that there are growing numbers

of people in Ontario who haven't been hit by your cuts but who you plan to help through the tax benefit—and as we know, any time you change the tax rolls the wealthy benefit more than the working; that's always been the case and that won't change, particularly with this Harris Tory government—but more and more people are saying: "I know we have to make cuts and I know we have to make decisions, and I know they'll be tough, but I don't want to be benefiting from this. I don't want money back when I see visions of children in need and families in poverty and the disabled having their services cut. I don't want that." I suspect some of them are seeing it as blood money, and they don't want that. I predict today that there'll be a growing number of people who will be telling this government day after day: "Don't continue to hurt people to give me a tax break. That's not fair."

"Fairness" is a word this government doesn't seem to understand.

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): Mr Speaker, let me also echo congratulations to you on your appointment.

I would like to take the time allotted to me this afternoon to look beyond the daily concerns that we discuss so thoroughly in this House. I'd like to address a few of the core issues that motivated me to seek this seat and also to speak to some of the very real hopes and concerns of the people of Scarborough-Ellesmere.

My riding is very much a microcosm of this province. It is rich with cultural diversity, innovative talents, skilled tradespeople and artisans. It is an intricately woven social fabric that presents its residents with an astounding array of opportunities and an inherent ability to meet the challenges that face us all. I do not believe that the people of Scarborough-Ellesmere are unique in asking their representative, as so many people have asked me over the past few weeks, what they ought to expect from government.

Everyone can see the waste, everyone can see the need for so much change, but what has become unclear to the residents of Scarborough-Ellesmere over the last decade is the relationship government has to their daily lives. Are we here to help or hinder? In short, it boils down to one simple question, asked over and over again: What are we here to do?

I think it's entirely appropriate that we enter into this discussion as we debate the government's throne speech. This agenda sets out very clearly the steps we must take and shows us just as clearly where we need to be. The cynicism that we all experienced as we brought our message to the front doors and town halls of this province is the result of politicians' unfulfilled and unfocused promises to solve any problem, in the government's domain and outside of it. These promises went unfulfilled precisely because they were unfocused. Because government failed to define its business, it could not hope to do its business well.

The people of Scarborough-Ellesmere have told me time and time again that they're tired of politicians who say government always has the answer. They've told me that government can serve them by getting out of the way more often than it can by spending more borrowed money on yet another ill-conceived, unwanted program. They've told me that government can make the way easier, but too often, in a clumsy effort to lend a hand, it clutters the path to success with insurmountable obstacles.

As a member of the cabinet I have a particular responsibility to carry the government's commonsense message to the issues that affect my ministry. The throne speech sets out very clearly some of the immediate actions that the government will take to bring its proper role more sharply into focus.

We will restore merit as the basis of hiring by repealing the Employment Equity Act and other quota legislation, getting government out of the business of telling employers who to hire and into the business of supporting equal opportunity.

We will repeal the Advocacy Act and will recognize government's proper role, alongside families and volunteers, in supporting the needs of the most vulnerable.

We will stop funding the seventh-inning stretch, because we honestly believe that people can stretch without our help.

And as we get out of those businesses in which the government has no role, we will focus on those areas where government quite properly plays a part.

In the longer term, reforms to the Human Rights Commission will improve its efficiency and allow it to better address the real cases of discrimination.

We are evaluating the constraints of overregulation with a view to encourage our agencies, like the Royal Ontario Museum, to more effectively serve its customers and to make better use of their human and financial resources.

I see my ministry as a partner in building opportunities. Government doesn't create art. We can't legislate a painting any more than we can purchase talent with tax dollars. What government can do is help to provide opportunities for the creativity and entrepreneurialism of our artists to flourish and to be recognized.

The government cannot unilaterally create jobs for women, the disabled and minorities. What we can do is support private sector efforts to recognize talent and ability wherever they exist.

The people of Scarborough-Ellesmere, like people in every community of this beautiful province, are concerned about jobs, and I'm delighted that the Premier has given me the opportunity to focus my attention and the government's attention on one of the fastest-growing job creators in Ontario: our cultural sector. This government understands that cultural industries have a significant economic impact on this province, and while we recognize the inherent value of the arts in our communities, we will not forget that cultural policy is also economic policy. Culture creates jobs.

I'm here today because the people of Scarborough-Ellesmere want major change, both in what our government does and in how it does it. They are not satisfied, nor should they be, to see deficit piled on deficit as the government drives away jobs with red tape and punishing taxes. They want to see government spend their money as carefully as they do. As we refocus the business of government, implementing the priorities introduced in the Common Sense Revolution and reiterated in the throne speech, we must meet a higher standard of values. If we are to overcome the cynicism that has built up following a decade of overspending and mismanagement, every project must meet the test that I assign for my ministry's operations. Citizens must be able to point and say with pride, "My tax dollars paid for that."

I'd like once again to thank the people of Scarborough-Ellesmere for the trust and confidence they've shown in me, and I'd like to thank the Premier for giving me the opportunity to serve as a minister. As I conclude my first speech in this House, I'd like to reiterate my commitment to live up to that trust and to do my best to build a better Ontario.

1550

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Mr Speaker, first of all, let me thank you for allowing me the opportunity to respond to the speech from the throne, but before I do so I feel compelled to thank those who made it possible for me to be the MPP for Sudbury.

To the people of the Sudbury riding, I thank you for your support, your trust and the faith you've placed in me. A very special thank you to my wife Maureen, my children Angie and Danny and our extended families, who over the years have always allowed me the opportunity to fulfil my political dreams, whether they be in the area of recreation, in the area of federation or in the area of municipal or provincial politics. My successes have always been and will always be very, very special moments of shared love and satisfaction. To the superb group of dynamic individuals and friends who have worked tirelessly to get me here, thank you for your excellence and for your dedication.

Before I start my response I would like to comment on and recognize some of the great people of Sudbury, from all three parties, who have represented Sudbury before me, those like Elmer Sopha, my next-door neighbour for 30 years, Bud Germa, Jim Gordon, Sterling Campbell and Sharon Murdock. They have provided for me an excellent example which I will try to follow.

During the next several minutes I will try to respond in a Sudbury way to the dedication that I will try to bring to this House but also to respond to the direction this government has outlined its agenda to be in the speech from the throne.

The city of Sudbury is a part of the region of Sudbury, which is the largest municipality in northern Ontario. Science North, located within my riding, is a world-class, hands-on science centre which is the largest tourist attraction north of Barrie. Our city is a major medical referral centre for northern Ontario, providing specialized services through the Sudbury General Hospital, the Sudbury Memorial Hospital, the Laurentian Hospital, the Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre and Network North, all within my riding.

The Sudbury neutrino observatory is an international high-science solar research project which invites international recognition within the world research community.

Sudbury is a city of firsts. Dr Paul Field conducted Canada's first heart bypass operation at the Memorial Hospital. The Sudbury region was the first community in Ontario to place an accessible taxi at the service of wheelchair passengers. Ours was the first city in Canada to use two-way radios in public works vehicles; the first city to use an electronically controlled traffic speed device; the first Ontario city to obtain the new telephone electronic switching system; and finally, the first Canadian city to have a privately owned television station.

Sudbury is the recipient of provincial, national and international awards, an award winner in land reclamation, including the planting of more than two million trees in the greening of Sudbury, which is recognized as an internationally successful operation.

Sudbury's Ramsey Lake was awarded the International Excellence on the Waterfront award and is the largest city-contained lake in North America, featuring both leisure living and recreational forms of enjoyment.

Our city has 30 named lakes within its boundaries and 90 within its region.

Sudbury is a city of excellence in education. Laurentian University, Cambrian College and the new Collège Boréal are all international models of educational institutions promoting excellence and preparedness for the 21st century.

My riding is a mecca of cultural diversity and the performing arts. The Sudbury Theatre Centre, Fringe North, Festival Boréal, Cinefest, the Snowflake Festival, the Blueberry Festival, the Garlic Festival and the Italian Festival provide a menu of inviting opportunities to experience the arts and culture of our city.

Sudbury is a classic example of the assimilation of multicultural groups coming together to form a common bond, a respect and tolerance of and for each other working together to be one, a strong single voice based on the strength of our different heritages and our different beliefs.

That, my fellow colleagues, is what Sudbury was and is.

Presently, the people of my riding are fearful of the direction of this government. We are fearful that the excellence of our health care services will be seriously eroded because of this government's direction, because of this government's cuts that weren't supposed to be but are. As the editorial in the September 29 edition of the Sudbury Star indicates in its title, "Harris Has No Mandate to Cut Health Care."

The Harris government's speech from the throne referred to individuals. Well, what about Michael Cousins, who's been fighting multiple sclerosis for eight years? Michael now fights two illnesses, that of MS and that of this provincial government, which is cutting his northern health travel grant.

Michael needs injections of betainterferon and has been taking part in an experimental drug trial for betainterferon since 1988. Along with this, he requires an MRI scan. Sudbury has no MRI machine because of this government's inaction and because of the unnecessary delays caused by restructuring. What about Michael, Mr Pre-

mier? Do we forget about him and those like him because they don't fit the revolution model?

The young adults and students in my riding are fearful that the excellence in education they see in Sudbury will erode because of this government's direction, that this education will be élitist and that it won't be available to the less fortunate and the average, hardworking, wage-earning student.

The constituents I represent are concerned that their municipal levels of government are going to have to bear an undue hardship because of this government's cuts to transfer payments to municipalities.

As Tom Davies, our regional chair, noted in an earlier address to the former Finance minister, "Local governments cannot plan and budget responsibly when the province downloads programs and services to the municipal level without also transferring adequate funding to manage those formerly administered by the province." It was true then and it is true now.

This government's agenda is punishing the hard work and dedication of the local politicians in both the city and region of Sudbury who have worked diligently over the course of the last 15 years to make our city debt-free and our region fiscally responsible. The agenda punishes the initiative and dedication of our local government and the people of my riding who will be punished by higher taxes or decreased services, or both, because of this government's direction.

If the Harris government does not respect the northern support or resource equalization programs, the people of northern Ontario, the people of my riding, the people of my city and the people of my region will be doubly punished. This is wrong, this is cruel, this is mean-spirited and this is the Harris agenda.

1600

The constituents of my riding are proud of the harmony and excellence which have developed between labour and management, and this has taken years to develop. The past and present presidents of our major unions, the Dave Pattersons, the Dave Campbells, the Ron MacDonalds, the Rick Briggs and the Rolly Gauthiers, have worked tirelessly over many years with the past and present presidents or CEOs of our major employers, the Mike Sopkos, the Frank Pickards and the Jim Ashcrofts, to provide a favourable balance between labour and management and a mutual respect for each other.

The people of the Sudbury riding want this harmonious balance to continue. Change that is necessary is good. Change without consultation is wrong, is regressive, is destructive, is the Harris agenda. The people of the Sudbury riding voted for change. They voted for this representative because they wanted a brighter future and they wanted jobs. They wanted economic growth and the protection of health care services.

They feel they won't receive these in listening to the speech from the throne. On June 8, the people of the Sudbury riding did not vote for higher unemployment, higher property taxes and health care user fees, but these people are fearful that this is exactly what's going to

happen after listening to the speech from the throne.

Mr Speaker, my fellow colleagues, I have been sent as a representative of the people of Sudbury to make government work better and to make government be more responsive. I implore the Harris team to strive to make this 36th Parliament an honest and unified Legislative Assembly. Let us assemble and let us legislate together, cooperatively, in the truest spirit of democracy. Clearly, the revolution needs some revisions which will reflect real common sense. The people of the Sudbury riding challenge you to work together to make this a mandate of interactive, constructive change for the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Riverdale.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Riverdale; that's right, Mr Speaker. I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment and I look forward to working with you.

I'd like to congratulate all of the members in this House and welcome all the new members. A scant few years ago I was sitting over there as a new member, and a scant few years from now I expect a few of you will be sitting over here as experienced members.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): All the new ones will be sitting there.

Interjections.

Ms Churley: That's true. Mr Speaker, I'm teasing the bears, I know, already.

But I am responding to a very serious subject today, and that's the throne speech. Obviously, we have different perspectives on how we need to get the Ontario economy back in shape. I think everybody here in this House has a desire to get the economy back in shape and to get people back to work. I don't doubt that for a moment.

I believe the problem we have here is that we have different perspectives on how to do that. In fact, our government did have a deficit reduction plan that would have reduced the deficit faster than this new government, because they are going to be giving tax giveaways that benefit the richest among us the most. There's something fundamentally wrong with that. I'm afraid that we're going to have to suffer these cuts—and when I say "we," I should say mostly the poor among us—and find out at the end of four or five years that there's still going to be a deficit, so whoever is in in the next government is still going to have to deal with a massive debt.

I've been paying a lot of attention, and more attention than usual lately, to American politics, because there's something very interesting going on there. I would advise Mr Harris and his new government to pay attention as well. Senator Bob Dole and our friend Senator Newt are having a fight. Do you know what they're fighting about? They're fighting about how deep the cuts that they have proposed as a Republican Party should go. Bob Dole thinks that maybe they should step back a little bit. Furthermore, Senator Dole has actually suggested that perhaps they shouldn't go as far with those tax cuts. And do you know why? People have had enough time—you're smiling; you won't be in a few months from now—to look at the implications of those cuts, because these cuts

to find \$7 billion to \$9 billion, as the government has already said, are just the beginning.

Look at what we already have seen happening to our social services that mostly affect women and children. This government is preparing tax cuts for the most wealthy among us on the very tiny, fragile backs of children and on the backs of women. That is unacceptable. You can sigh if you want, but look at the record and see where you have gone so far in terms of those cuts.

I know there's more to come and you say we're all going to suffer equally. There's something very wrong with this picture.

There are some people who are saying that this government is anti-woman, and I have to say—I don't like to say it. I look across at a sea of men sitting over there and I don't like to say this. There's a couple of women over here and I'm certainly glad to see the 11 women in your caucus with us. But I do hope that you will stand up for women in your caucus and make sure that the issues that we've been fighting for for over 20 years are not torn apart by your government, because that seems to be what's starting to happen.

The thing that has, I guess, bothered me most in the last few days is the cuts to transition houses and the services they provide, because how much more vulnerable can you get than a battered woman who's been abused by her spouse, who has been perhaps stalked by her spouse, who has perhaps been threatened with death and furthermore, in many cases, who has kids to take care of, to get up in the morning, to get them to school and to protect them? How much more vulnerable can you get in this society? Where do we draw the line as we get into these cuts?

Mr Speaker, in four months this government has gone too far, and I can guarantee you that women out there, women from all walks of life, will not put up with this. Many women—most women—bear children. We don't like to see children going hungry and we don't like to see other women being placed at more risk in abusive situations. Women will speak out. You will hear from women about what you're doing, and you will hear from a lot of men who support women about what you're doing.

I'd like to speak briefly about birthing centres. Monday, I guess, when I asked the question to the minister responsible for women's issues, she referred it to the Minister of Health, and he talked about bricks and mortar. This is not about building new buildings; I think he knows that. The women, and some men too, who are involved and have been, I believe, for about 17 years trying to get birthing centres in Ontario and finally were there, have a very good, sound financial case. There is no question about it that births in a birthing centre cost less than half of what births cost in a hospital. These women aren't talking about building new buildings; they're offering women a choice.

Particularly with the restructuring going on that we know has to happen, it makes sense—and I believe at one point this government talked about this—to have people. They invited the community, they invited people to get

involved, to tell them how they can save money, how communities can do things better and more efficiently. These people came to the government and said, "We have a way of giving people more choice and we also have a way of saving money," because women are going to go on having babies, and now most of them are going to be having them in the hospital and it's going to cost the taxpayers more than twice as much.

It doesn't make sense, and that's part of the problem. This is supposed to be a Common Sense Revolution. People do want real common sense. This is not common sense when you're closing down, taking money out of transition houses for battered women, stopping birthing centres that save the government money. It doesn't make sense and sooner or later that's going to come back to haunt you. People are shaking their heads, but I can guarantee it.

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Like everybody I don't have a lot of time, and as also the critic for Environment and Energy I'd like to touch on some issues around that for a while. There was very little, I think no, mention of the environment or protecting our environment in the Common Sense Revolution. There is, however, in the speech from the throne and in the Common Sense Revolution, and also a statement, or maybe it was an article, in the Globe and Mail I read from the Minister of Environment and Energy, who talked about deep cuts in that ministry—I believe up to 40%; they've already begun—and deregulation in general across the government.

I don't think anybody argues with deregulation when we have regulations that don't make sense. In fact our government—of course you people over there aren't going to acknowledge it—actually did bring forward bills that cut a lot of red tape and did get rid of many regulations and processes that didn't make sense any more. And I'll say too there's probably more that we can do in that.

But the kinds of regulation cuts that we're talking about in the Ministry of Environment and Energy are frightening. There's a lot. We haven't solved the environmental problems yet, and I can assure you that people out there want the government to protect them. They want their children's health protected; they want the environment protected. They always have, for years and years. It wasn't a big issue in this election, but it doesn't mean that people don't care. They do.

You know, there's considerable concern, and you should all perk up and listen to this, about lower sperm counts in Ontario today. I've even heard that penises are getting smaller. This is not a joke.

Interjections.

Ms Churley: This is not a joke. I won't say anything about the people across the way, but seriously, this is a fact and for those of us who have baby boys, children growing up, it's scary. This is really scary. There are studies being done that show that there is a correlation between these low sperm counts and pollution. That's very scary. We're talking about reproduction here.

The International Joint Commission has recently come out and condemned this new government for reinstating

our government's ban on solid waste garbage incineration because, again, there are millions and millions of tons of dioxins and other toxic waste in our Great Lakes, much of which they feel is coming—I shouldn't say "they feel." The studies they have done seem to show that much of this is coming from solid waste incinerators from around the world.

These are just a few of the problems that exist in the environment today. There are many, many others. People want to make sure that there are enough inspectors out there to keep the hazardous wastes and other toxins out of our environment. People want responsible government. They have given you the mandate to be responsible, and I ask that people take a very good look at the kinds of chops and cuts that they are making and make sure that it is real common sense for the people of Ontario.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I am pleased and honoured to be a member of the Harris government, which has received a clear and compelling mandate from the electorate. It is indeed a privilege to serve in the PC caucus.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to you, Mr Speaker, and I agree with all the honourable members who have previously spoken that you wear the mantle of office with dignity and with distinction.

A Conservative member, the late Honourable Russell Rowe from Northumberland riding, also served for many years with grace and decorum as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly here in Ontario. More recently, Joan Fawcett was our MPP, and before that Howard Sheppard held the post. The Honourable Bill Goodfellow, who served as Minister of Agriculture, also hailed from our riding. I salute each one of them today, and I hope I can equal the dedication and enthusiasm that they brought to this job.

I appreciate being appointed to act as parliamentary assistant for the environment and I look forward to working with the honourable members from both sides of the House on environmental issues. May I add that it is indeed a pleasure to be working with the Honourable Brenda Elliott, Minister of Environment and Energy.

I would today like to tell the story of a young couple in my home riding of Northumberland. Not so long ago, they found themselves out of work, down on their luck and facing financial ruin. However, rather than turning immediately to the government, to keep the family going they peeled and pre-cooked French fries for local restaurants. Going door to door, my constituent sold his French fries and then returned home to peel more potatoes with his wife. Sometimes the couple worked all night to meet their customers' demands, and slowly the business grew. Eventually their hard work paid off. They now own a successful business employing nine other people, and process up to 8,000 pounds of potatoes a day. They were willing to take a chance. They saw opportunity where others only saw spuds. They knew instinctively what this province is all about: finding new opportunities for growth and making the most of them.

Think of the impact their operation has had on the nine people who work there now. Multiply that times hundreds more similar businesses that would open every year if we gave them just half a chance. This province was built by people who were willing to take a chance, to risk something. And risks must be taken, because the greatest risk of all in life is to risk nothing.

I'm feeling very optimistic today about the future of our province because of people like the couple I've just described. There are many more like them in Northumberland county and throughout the province of Ontario. With their help, we are going to turn this province around. In the years ahead, growth will be centred on companies with five employees or less. Already 80% of new jobs are created in that sector.

This government must encourage such entrepreneurship and strip away the useless bureaucracy and red tape that is holding business back. That is what my constituents have told me they want from this government, and that is what this government intends to do. Many of my constituents believe, as I do, that the best social program is a job. We must re-establish an environment that welcomes business to make our economic recovery a reality.

I was pleased this weekend to see a half-page article in the Toronto Star about my riding. It correctly described Northumberland as a quiet region on Lake Ontario's north shore, one that is also located on the doorstep of the greater Toronto area. Northumberland could be described as an island, with Rice Lake to the north, Lake Ontario to the south, the Ganaraska River to the west and the Trent River to the east.

The article spoke kindly of our developing Heritage Shores tourism strategy, and rightly so, because tourism is now a major industry in Northumberland. The waterways and rolling hills of Northumberland provide year-round recreational opportunities. However, agriculture has traditionally been the most important economic generator in our area.

More recently, manufacturing has developed a key importance in the riding. Today the manufacturing sector provides employment for approximately one third of the workforce in Northumberland. We are well positioned for major growth in the next economic boom.

Over the last several years, Northumberland has become home to an increasing number of families and retirees from the Toronto area. We welcome them and are excited about the residential growth possibilities in the years ahead.

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At the same time, Northumberland is facing many of the same problems as the rest of this province: high unemployment, issues of law enforcement, highway safety, taxes, loss of physicians, educational reform, child care and the environment. But by and large, their greatest concern is for job creation.

I believe many of our problems, though complex, are within our power to control. However, the solution to unemployment can only be based on an approach which transcends selfish interests and regional demands. We must do what is best for the province as a whole. A direct confrontation with our economic problems and a unity of purpose are essential to our success. That is why I support the Common Sense Revolution.

I began my speech today by talking about a young couple in business for themselves. To conclude, I'd like to carry the business theme one step further.

On June 8, it could be said a major new business was formed in this province. A new CEO and management team were hired. This team has a plan, a four-year strategic business plan. Also new is that this management team sold the strategic plan for a full year. By being clear about what was in the plan, its goals and objectives, the new management team won the confidence of all of the shareholders. We will not betray their confidence.

We have set about the task of making Ontario a growth industry. The new government has taken over a highly complex business on the verge of bankruptcy. Ontario's previous management accumulated tens of billions of dollars in additional debt. That massive debt growth rate was unsustainable and the stockholders knew it all too well. The bond rating services knew it too. Let's face it, you can only borrow money to pay the interest on your debts for so long.

I would suggest that we could learn something from the young couple I spoke of earlier this afternoon. I believe as a government we need to be more like that couple. We need to roll up our sleeves, not be afraid to take some risks and make the changes that are necessary. We must ensure a clear future for our children and for our grandchildren and one that is as debt-free as possible. The challenge now facing this government is clear. We must bring spending back in line and eliminate the deficits that are putting Ontario's future in jeopardy.

The road back to fiscal responsibility will not be easy. To be sure, we may suffer setbacks along the way, but if there is one thing my constituents have told me, it is that they will not tolerate any detours from the chosen path. I remain committed to that path and I urge each and every member of our government to keep the faith and do what is right for Ontario.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): While the members are applauding their colleague, I welcome him to the House. I hope he looks at his speech in the next three or four years to see if he can be consistent, if the government can be consistent.

It's an honour and a privilege to speak in the House today on this throne speech debate. It is unfortunate; I would have hoped I could speak at length on the things I've seen here and to respond to our people who so gracefully and willingly, I would say, gave me the honour to represent them in Scarborough North.

I invite all my colleagues to visit the wonderful and beautiful place of Scarborough North, where people live—and of course in your ridings—in vibrancy, who want family life to be fulfilled, with independence, and who are hoping that we have a government that is caring, giving and understanding.

I've learned over my decade here in the House—it sounds like a long time—to understand the three ideologies of the parties, the Progressive Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party. There are differences, of course. They are diverse in the approach they take to address the issues that are some-

times so challenging in our country, in our province.

Ontarians have had an opportunity to see those three differences in a clear light in the last 10 years. They have seen an NDP government, which believes that labour should be the only one which should handle capital and dominate the world, pitting one against the other. They have seen what has happened, even with the bill that was introduced, the reform, Bill 40, where they had difficulty with some people operating their businesses here. They've also seen that tenants are not the only people who have an interest in housing, but also landlords, developers and tenants to make sure it is fair.

The PC seem to me to embrace big business in a rather tenacious and clutching financial embrace that comes with it. They are the only ones that can handle the economy, the only ones who understand the way of living, the trickle-down theory, "Give me all the money and give me all the things to do and I will pass it on, as we gather all this capital and gather all this money."

But we are saying that that's not the way. What we have found is one party's ideology fighting against another ideology. The Liberals, of course, as you see, do not believe in that aspect.

Interjection.

Mr Curling: My dear colleague—I'm glad the Minister of Housing is in the House. I will have the opportunity to put some rather testy questions to him. I call him the minister of destruction. Housing has really gone down in a terrible way since this government has taken over.

But the Liberals believe that the private sector plus the public sector, working together cooperatively, can make this country, this province, vibrant and feel like a place to live the way all we Canadians like to know, that we are caring and giving and understanding. We can build on the economic and the social fabric we are all fighting to do, that family means something and that we can be independent and not blaming it on others.

In their few months of power, Mr Speaker—and I know you will fully agree with me—in just a few weeks of power we have witnessed an extremely callous, really, an unfeeling indifference within this province, a grim, morbid detachment of seeking solutions all for the bottom line.

A pessimistic view of our economy as a cloud of darkness has come over Ontario all of a sudden. The people have an insecurity about certain interest groups, the fear of interest groups. They're saying, as your leader had stated clearly, that no grass will go unturned. He doesn't care about the protests or the democratic voice of the people, who will state to you: "We are hurting. We are in pain. It's pain for us. Our families are having no jobs." He will say: "I'll turn a blind eye to all this. We shall," as the previous speaker said, "steer the course. We shall do what we have to do regardless of it all."

He calls it a revolution. With this revolution, if families are destroyed in the process, if jobs are gone in the process, we shall go to that bottom line because Bay Street said we must have a balanced budget at the cost of family, at the cost of many things that really got to the process of people who want to live decently.

It's a very pessimistic view of our economy, I would say. They have an insecurity about certain things that are happening further around here. If we bring to this Parliament some concerns of people, they then bring their letters and say: "Here is someone else who has achieved. We have kicked them out and now they're working."

You know, it's surprising, but the poor are rather confused. They are extremely confused out there now. They are saying to themselves: "How can I cause this recession? Why is it I, the poor, who have caused this recession?" All the time they were struggling to get jobs and to better themselves and their family, and the blame now of the recession, because we're in a deficit, is the poor.

So what has this government done? "We shall cut those we are supporting to the tune of 21.5%, because everybody must contribute." But we don't cut Bay Street to that line. We don't cut the banks, which are making an enormous amount of money, because they will give it back in numbers.

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Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Read the red book. Come on now.

Mr Curling: My colleague in the NDP heckles me. They forgot that this was an inclusive participation of Ontario, including all, not only labour.

Sadly, they would rather blame certain people in society to get this revolutionary no sense kind of revolution they speak about. I would appeal to them that they shall learn in the process as we go along that it will not be so.

People are suffering and this has overtaken them in many ways. In their own psyches they feel feelings of rage, hunger, contempt, fear, desperation. They feel that this common sense is no sense at all.

What do I tell Tracy Tonner? Her contribution was reduced to \$691 and her rent is \$700. She's worried that she cannot feed her kid. Hunger comes to the forefront for her because she cannot send her child to school. She has no money for food, to pay for that. This government feels, "If we do that, she'll go out and get a job." She has been looking for a job for months, unable to find any kind of job because the economy out there tells her there are no jobs. This government stated, "If we take away her money, if we take away that contribution, it will motivate her to work."

This young woman and her child are suffering today and feel despair. She has this rage that the recession has been blamed on her and those people who found themselves in that kind of condition.

The contempt they feel in this province today—the people of Ontario feel that this government is changing the way they live. They're forcing them to live in a different way, without any consultation, because: "We have a strong mandate and we can do whatever we want. We have a strong mandate here. We don't have to have any consultation. We don't have to speak to the people any more. We will just steer the course and we shall go on, regardless of what they do." It's a contempt for democracy. I say to you, revisit it all, consult with the

people, because it's their lives, not yours. It's their lives, which they like to carry on in a very respectable way without being abused by this arrogant power that we have been seeing around this place. I just hope they come to their senses.

Our people fear whether or not they will have a job tomorrow because Mike the Knife will get up tomorrow and say, "It's gone," chopping them all off, without regard to any family and the people who are suffering because they don't know if they will have a job tomorrow. We cannot live like that. People cannot live like that, fearful of jobs and fearful of what's happening.

Some of the day care centres are closed and mothers have nowhere to put their kids, because they said it's the best way to do that: "Go and find a mother or grandmother, go and find an aunt. Go and find someone who will look after your kids."

What world are you living in? Don't you realize that today even grandmothers are working, just trying to keep up? Who's going to keep those kids? They're trying their best to go on, in other words, to release those people into the society to be productive. As matter of fact, it helps society, if you understand your economics.

The senses are inundated. This government reverberates with its growing of common sense initiatives and proposals that are frightening.

My own sense is that their sense is seriously flawed. There is no sense in cutting 3,700 housing jobs. I heard this Housing minister and for a moment I will address the housing situation. This Housing minister was saying, "We are not in the housing business any more." Let me tell you, Minister, you'd better be in the housing business.

I have spoken to all those developers who are saying: "Cut rent control. Get rid of that. Stop the social housing, because we will build it." They will not build it. They will just build at the top end of the market where the profit is. I said, "What about the bottom end of the market, those people who can't afford it?" I tell the minister they said to me, "It is not our responsibility because we're into capital gain, profit." I don't blame them. I don't see why they should go out and build houses they're not making a profit on.

You are in the housing business. You never did in any way—no government paid out any money for housing in that respect. It is the private sector that builds it all the time, and the spinoff from that is much more than that. It is those who buy carpets and those who buy building materials, those who get jobs, and on and on. That the economy goes on in itself, that helps. When you cut all those housing projects to say, "We're not in the housing business any more," you have killed a part of the economy that would be very vibrant itself.

The problem with social housing was not the building of it all. It was the inefficiency, the incompetent way it was run. The cost there was exorbitant, of course. Don't blame those people who have no housing to go to and kill those housing projects, because it's going to cost you much more.

I hope some sense will come to the minister, if he has any influence at all. I'm going to depend on you, Mr Minister, that you will have a voice in cabinet, that you will influence your Premier, who feels, "Gone." Where are these people going to go? Today, as winter comes, there are people who have nowhere to go, nowhere to go.

Interjections.

Mr Curling: The heckling over there—I'll ignore them, because they're not concerned at all about building housing for people who can't afford the top end of the market. There is none there.

I hope you will make some sense in which to bring about some sanity and some concern, some dignity. Bring back some hope to the people of Ontario. Bring back that hope. Don't kill them. Don't be like the big bully who walks into school, gets the little wimp and beats up that wimp and says, "How big and bad I am."

These people need help. That's what we have government for, that's why we pay taxes, because when they are disadvantaged and discouraged and disillusioned, the government will pick up that banner and carry them forward.

I hope, as we look forward to the next three or four or five years, that there is a change in government of more compassion. I look forward to debating this topic much more.

Mr Hampton: It's my opportunity to respond to the throne speech. I'll try to be brief, because I know a lot of members have things they'd like to say.

First of all, let me say that we all recognize the need to be careful with government expenditure. The government that I was a part of recognized that more than three years ago when in one year, through the social contract, expenditure control and some additional revenues, we managed to lower the annual deficit that year by \$8 billion—quite a substantial undertaking and, I think, quite a significant achievement.

I wish that the new government was right that simply by giving wealthy Ontarians a large tax cut the complex problems of living in the modern world could be solved and answered quickly and easily. If only there were a quick fix for our social, economic and environmental problems as we enter the 21st century. There isn't a quick fix, so we need to look carefully at the Conservative government's prescription for our problems, their so-called revolution.

At the heart, there is little new in this revolution. In fact, this is vintage 1980 Ronald Reagan, and we need to look at what Ronald Reagan left behind in the United States. In 1980, Reagan said there were three keys to solving the problems of the United States.

The first was a substantial tax cut for high-income individuals. In fact, Mr Reagan's tax cut was 30%—10% a year for three years. Remarkable how similar that is to what this government proposes. The Reagan theory was that if high-income earners could receive this kind of tax cut they would invest it in the American economy, they would create new economic activity and new jobs. That was the theory.

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The second key in the Reagan revolution was, cut government spending, especially in the areas like educa-

tion, health, housing and transfers to cities and municipalities. In other words, eliminate or downgrade the community infrastructure, the glue that in many cases holds our communities together. The message was pretty clear that if you eliminate funding and eliminate expenditure in those areas you'll have the money you need to give wealthy individuals that 30% tax cut.

The third key was, do away with a lot of the laws and rules designed to ensure protection of the environment and health and safety in the workplace. The message was that if you allow more pollution, if you allow more degradation of the environment, then industry, corporations, businesses have to spend less money cleaning up the environment and have to spend less money trying to eliminate pollution and the degradation of the environment. That money they save can then be put to use somewhere else. So you downgrade the environment and you downgrade health and safety in the workplace, hoping to save some money there and put it somewhere else.

Those were the essential messages of Ronald Reagan in 1980; they are the essential messages of this Conservative government in 1995, so there is nothing new here.

In fact, if you want to do some interesting reading, Ronald Reagan's first economic report—and believe it or not, it's called Two Revolutions in Economic Policy: The First Economic Reports of Presidents Kennedy and Reagan—policies for the 1980s, basically sets out the three keys: Slow the growth of government spending; reduce taxes, the 30% tax cut; and regulatory reform—downgrade health and safety, downgrade food inspections, downgrade protection of the environment.

I would say that actually whoever wrote the government's throne speech probably should have footnoted Ronald Reagan's first economic report, otherwise somebody who was a careful academic might suggest a wee bit of plagiarism here. You can read this for yourselves. I got it out of the parliamentary library—very interesting reading.

What did Ronald Reagan leave behind? What did the Reagan revolution leave behind in the United States? We need to look at that.

First of all, deficits. The deficit in the United States grew in 1980 from \$914 billion, when Reagan assumed the presidency, to \$2.6 trillion in 1988 when he left; in other words, tripled the deficit; \$2.6 trillion is \$2.6 thousand billions, all right? That was the success of the Reagan revolution, the big tax cuts in terms of curbing the deficit. It grew three times. That was the debt, from \$914 billion to \$2.6 trillion. What happened in annual deficits? It went from \$73 billion in 1980 to \$127 billion in 1982, to \$207.8 billion in 1983, \$212.3 billion in 1985, \$221 billion in 1986, and so on.

The US trade deficit went from a \$19.5-billion surplus in 1980 to a \$140-billion deficit in 1987. The United States went from the largest creditor nation in the world to the largest debtor nation under Ronald Reagan's revolution in only seven years.

What about jobs? Well, yes, there were some jobs created by this investment, but the reality is when people looked backward in 1990 over those 10 years, 60% of the

new jobs created paid less than US\$7,000 a year. In fact, most of that job growth was in part-time and temporary work, not the kind of permanent, full-time, well-paying jobs you need to have in order to run a good economy.

Poverty: There was an overall increase in the measure of poverty and the widening of the gap between rich and poor. The number of persons living below the official poverty line increased from 26 million in 1979 to over 32.5 million in 1987. And where were the cuts? Well, the cuts were in the school lunch program, the school breakfast program, child care programs; \$6.8 billion off the food stamp program that helped people who were in difficult economic circumstances feed themselves.

Where are the cuts happening here? Look at today's press summary. "Cuts to funding for 13 maternity homes...for young pregnant women; end of all prevention and treatment services for men who beat up their spouses; elimination of a special fund used to set up new day care centres; less money for adult counselling; end to funding for 25 neighbourhood centres." End of money generally for women. "Less money for recreation programs." It's starting to sound the same.

What about crime? Well, crime increased in the United States. There was both more crime and more serious crime. Indeed, today in the United States building jails and prisons is a new growth industry. The prison population went from 300,000 in 1980 to over 500,000 in 1986 and has exploded since then. Think about it.

I would have a plea for this government: Slow down before you take the leap of faith and think that a 30% tax cut is the answer for the economic woes. Look carefully at how badly it failed in the United States with Ronald Reagan. Before you start dramatically reducing the glue that holds our communities together—the health care, the education, help for children, help for women who are battered and bruised—think about what it has led to in the United States: increases in poverty, increases in the crime rate, having to make more investments in jails and prisons. Have some balance in what you're doing. Take time to take a careful second look at what you're doing before you do really long-term harm to our communities.

We all recognize the need to spend carefully. Our government recognized over three years ago that the kind of economic trough we ended in 1989 was not going to be a quick-fix one. We only ask that you do the same before, as I say, you do that kind of irreparable harm to this province that we all value and appreciate so much.

Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your most recent appointment, and I wish you Godspeed in all your deliberations. Also, I would like to acknowledge my predecessor, Mike Cooper, for his excellent representation for the riding of Kitchener-Wilmot.

The riding of Kitchener-Wilmot has been my home for over 35 years. I consider it a great honour that the people of my riding have elected me to be their member of provincial Parliament. I will strive to serve and represent their needs at all times.

Kitchener-Wilmot is a distinct and diverse riding. It includes half the city of Kitchener and all of the township of Wilmot. The fabric of the community is a blend of rural and urban living while maintaining a strong agricultural and industrial base.

Kitchener is also known worldwide for its annual Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest that, incidentally, starts tomorrow and concludes on October 14. The Oktoberfest festival has been a vibrant festival for over 27 years and has contributed over \$18 million to the local economy. This festival is a superb example of a community partner-ship without government intervention.

I would also like to acknowledge Castle Kilbride of Baden, Ontario, on being designated a national historic site. All the residents of Wilmot township take great pride in the preservation of this landmark building. I encourage my colleagues of the House and particularly the people of Ontario to visit this fine example of Victorian architecture.

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The majority of the people I talk to in my riding strongly agree that the government is too cumbersome and controls too much in their daily lives. The majority also endorses the direction which our government is taking in downsizing and improving efficiencies in Ontario. Businesses in Ontario have been providing improved customer service utilizing less people and less resources for many years. Our government must lead by example, by becoming more customer service-oriented. The meaning of "civil servant" has to be taken literally, because the people of Kitchener-Wilmot, and more importantly Ontario, expect more from their tax dollar.

My riding is an area of economic growth, cultural diversity, entrepreneurship and a tourism destination of choice in Ontario. The implementation of the government's agenda in the throne speech is necessary and most vital to the future of the riding of Kitchener-Wilmot and to the people of Ontario.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I want to join in this debate. Mr Speaker, let me congratulate you and the other members of the Speaker's table. A Tory from Perth: We haven't had one here, I think, Mr Speaker, since Fred Edwards some several years ago. You are, I think, the member for Perth, am I correct? So I want to congratulate you on your election and on your selection as the Deputy Speaker, and I'm delighted to see so many new members in this assembly. I think we have the largest intake of new members in this, the 36th, Parliament that we've had in many, many a decade. I sense a real mood of excitement on the part of the some 72 or 73 newly elected members.

Like the members for Rainy River and—who else is around here?—oh, yes, Essex South and Sault Ste Marie and Fort York, I am a returned soldier. This was my seventh campaign, my seventh successful campaign, and for that I want to thank the electors and the good people of Renfrew North, who once again entrusted their support to me to carry their concerns to this Legislature.

It seems incredible that it was 20 years ago this fall that I came here first. I was in fact looking at some of the

literature of that campaign. It's hard to believe that when I came here 20 years ago one of the ablest members I've ever known, the Duke of Kent, W. Darcy McKeough, presented a budget in this place in that year that offered a \$1.8-billion deficit on about a \$12.5-billion expenditure plan. Incroyable. Almost a \$2-billion deficit on a \$12-billion expenditure plan. That was the fiscal environment into which I came 20 years ago in this Legislature.

As other members have indicated, there has been a great deal of change in the last few months and certainly over those number of years. I want to encourage all members, newly elected and those returning, to maintain a good participation in the debates of this place. I think you'll find, as I have over the years, that it is an environment of some excitement and some camaraderie. There will be days, of course, when we don't always agree. There'll probably be many days when there will be sharp disagreement. I suspect in this Parliament we will see some of the clearest lines of delineation that have been seen here in over half a century. That is not necessarily a bad thing. I believe that we are at a very significant turn of the page, a turn in the road.

The conservatism, for example, in which I have grown up was the conservatism of Les Frost, Bill Davis and John Robarts. The conservatism of Mr Harris is a very different kind of conservatism. In his absence, let me congratulate Mr Harris on a singular and spectacular electoral victory. I was saying to some of my Tory friends the other day—I have some; I even have some Tory relatives—that you have to reach back into the era of Les Frost to find an electoral victory of this magnitude. Needless to say, I was not happy, because I was on the losing side.

But I know something of what Mr Harris has soldiered through over the last five years and, together with his friend and mentor Tom Long, they have pulled off a truly spectacular victory, one of the most singular victories, I would submit, in the 20th century of Ontario politics. For that he particularly, Mr Harris, the leader of the government, deserves our congratulations. Winning the election may in fact be a much easier thing than fulfilling the mandate. But I say again that from where I stand and from where I observe the politics of Ontario, this is a very, very different political debate than anything I have experienced in my lifetime.

We have now a clarity of choice that has probably not been there in much of the postwar period. We have an American-styled conservatism that is radical in its orientation; is, I regret, in some of its application apparently mean-spirited. As a number of members have observed over the early days of this new government's mandate, those people who the new government has singled out for special attention are the young, the poor, the disabled, the marginalized. There has almost been a joyful enthusiasm in singling those people out for special attention, and in that respect it does reflect what I've been seeing in the United States in these last number of years.

You know, I have a great deal of respect for the Conservative tradition in Ontario and in Canada. You can't come from my part of eastern Ontario, those old

towns of Kingston and Brockville and Cornwall and Renfrew and Bytown and Perth, and not understand the origins of Canadian conservatism. It is because I know something of those origins that I look at this new breed of conservatism and say, "This is foreign to the land of my birth." I wonder what Mr Frost and Mr Robarts would say if they were to return. I really wonder. I was somewhat amused to see my old friend and adversary William Grenville Davis here when His Honour read the speech, a speech that I watched from the anteroom.

Mr Baird: He voted for it.

Mr Conway: The member for Nepean says, "He voted for it." Well, Mr Davis is a very loyal Conservative. I wonder what he did in that ballot box and I know that he wonders every day what the real intent of the government is. I see the stories about the land that TVO is to be privatized; I wonder what Mr Davis thinks. We are always hearing around this place that it is one of the proudest parts of the Davis legacy.

But we have now before us in this Legislature and before the province a polarization, a delineation as between an American-styled, right-wing conservatism that is radical in its outlook, mean-spirited in some of its application, and I think as a Liberal there has never been a better time and a more important time for my colleagues and myself in the Liberal Party to advance with equal vigour a values-based Liberal alternative to what Mr Harris has offered the province and is now going to offer by way of his government's mandate.

Let me be clear and let me be fair: He has won a strong and clear mandate and as a democrat I stand here and say to you, Mr Speaker, and through you to the assembly, that Mr Harris has a right to develop a program consistent with his electoral manifesto.

I for one will watch, as will the voters and the people of north Renfrew watch, with very keen interest to see how Mr Harris's supply-side economics are going to produce the 750,000 new jobs over the course of this mandate; how it is that \$6 billion or \$7 billion worth of government spending is going to be taken away on an annual basis; how it is that \$5 billion worth of tax cut revenue is going to be surrendered on an annual basis; and how it is that, at the end of the year 2000 or whenever it is now estimated to be by the government, the books will be balanced.

1700

You know, when Ronald Reagan told the American public that he was going to do more or less the same thing, no less a person than George Herbert Walker Bush said, "It's voodoo; it can't be done." The fact of the matter is, looking back on the Reagan experience, George Herbert Walker Bush and many others were right in their assessment: Two plus two still equals four.

I suspect that even the government back bench is going to be stunned to find out how truly painful the next few months and years will be when people, including the government back bench, understand how deep into the muscle of extremely important government programs will have to be the cuts to effect the promises made during the recent spring campaign.

But that is for the future, Mr Speaker. I stand here today as the proud representative of the people of Renfrew to tell you and the House that in my community of Pembroke and Renfrew county the number one priority continues to be the creation of wealth and the creation of employment. We have in my community, as we have across much of the province, a level of unemployment that is simply unacceptable. The number one concern of the people I represent is to bring those unemployment rates down.

Now, the government has offered a series of initiatives—we saw one yesterday; we will see more in the coming weeks—but the crux of the government's job-creating strategy is the supply-side economics represented by the \$5-billion tax cut. We shall see what we shall see.

I know in places like Maynooth and Stirling they can't wait because, as the honourable member from Hastings would want to agree, the unemployment rates in his communities are a concern for him, as they are for me.

Health care was certainly a major concern, and is a major issue, in the community where I live, namely, the city of Pembroke and the county of Renfrew. I watched with some interest the gymnastics of the new Minister of Health who stands here every day to tell us, "Restructuring if necessary, but not necessarily restructuring." He said some very interesting things today about his real intent, and I suspect in the coming weeks it will become painfully evident from Windsor to Cornwall and from Toronto to Timmins just what the agenda is going to be.

One of the areas of health care that is of particular relevance to my rural, small-town county is this whole question of the attraction and the support of physicians in small communities, I say, again with the member from Hastings opposite.

We read in the papers just the other day about the problems at Bancroft. The problems of rural hospitals and rural communities in their attraction of and support for and maintenance of good health care and medical providers are an issue that truly faces the province and the nation. Happily, the Minister of Health says he has answers. With my very ears, I heard him say that on CBC Radio in Ottawa just a few weeks ago. I will be very interested to hear how it is he is going to now deliver on those commitments.

In the city of Pembroke, where I live, there is a plan being advanced by the district health council to close one of our hospitals. It is not a plan that I support. My own view is that in the city of Pembroke, where we have the Pembroke General Hospital and the Pembroke Civic Hospital, two fine institutions which have served our community very well for nearly 100 years, rather than close one of the hospitals, we ought to have a proposal, we ought to have a plan that brings together a joint board with one administration offering two differentiated hospital sites. That's the commitment that I made during the election and that's the commitment that I intend to support during the course of this Parliament.

Job creation, health care, the role of government in communities large and small—there will be much to debate in this Parliament as we go forward through this session and others between now and the next election.

One of the reasons that I'm a Liberal is that I believe in those core Liberal values of fairness, moderation, tolerance and opportunity. I do not, I say to you, Mr Speaker, see any reason why those values are any less important to Ontario in 1995 than they were when I came to this Legislature in 1975. And it is to those ideals and it is to those values that I will be turning my attention and my energy over the course of this the 36th Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I want to begin by thanking the diverse community of Fort York for sending me back into this Legislature. We have done much together and we will for certain do a great deal together as well to solve some of the community problems we will face together.

I want to begin my remarks by referring to the Toronto Star publisher, John Honderich, who in January 1995, in speaking to a new vision for the city, said that it should be founded on three pillars, and they are culture, community and commerce. I subscribe to that. I believe that what he says about a new vision for the city applies for the province as well.

I also believe that community, culture and commerce are interdependent and that when you diminish one you begin to dismantle the balance of them all. I think this government has begun to do that in ways that perhaps some people haven't quite comprehended but they will, within six months to a year.

I know that this government and the members of this government are so convinced of the infallibility of the Common Sense Revolution that I am not going to try to convince them and waste my time trying to do that, but rather talk through you, Mr Speaker, to the public about some of the things that this government is doing to them.

I want to begin by talking briefly about culture. What I say about culture is that the previous government spent a great deal of time and money to support the arts and cultural sectors. We spent money establishing the Ontario Publishing Centre. We spent a great deal of money to support the Ontario film investment program, through that program. We have spent money establishing the commercial theatre development fund. We have done the same with the sound recording investment program.

We've done this because we are constantly under threat from the Americans in particular: 97% of screen time is taken up by American film, 3% is Canadian; 80% of book publishing and magazine publishing is controlled by the Americans, to some extent the British, the rest is Canadian. The same applies to sound recording as well: 80% or so is American and the rest is Canadian. We are constantly under threat in terms of preserving our identity, and it is a very fragile thing.

So when the minister says, "We're spending a lot of money," I say to her that she has cut a great deal of money. In fact, in the last little while she's cut \$16 million and in July she cut \$15 million from the Ontario film investment program and cut the Ontario Film Development Corp by half as well.

When you cut this sector in the way you do, you're cutting employment and you're cutting into what shapes

our identity as a province. That might be all right for them, because it's quite possible they feel very comfortable with American culture. They certainly borrow a great deal of American ideology, which is visible in everything they do, so perhaps they don't mind that the rest of what is so fragile about Canadian cultural society, through book and magazine publishing, sound recording and the rest, is taken over. But for many of us in Ontario, we're certainly very concerned about that.

When the minister says the best thing we can do is to simply get out of the way and let the private sector take care of things, she's wrong. The private sector is involved already in the cultural sector. But what's more important is that the government of Ontario is involved, and when the government of Ontario is involved with funding, the private sector contributes even more. That's clear, and the facts bear that out. So if you get out of the way as a government, the private sector will not be there to support it.

1710

Yes, there has been growth in culture, but it's not because the government wasn't there to support it. To believe that culture has grown in employment in this province on its own is wrongheaded, and to abandon culture at this time is the worst thing they could do.

That's at the level of culture. I'm not going to convince the minister that she's wrong or the government or the Premier that they're wrong. But I urge the public, I urge the cultural workers, who are numerous in this province, to watch what this government is doing, because it is dismantling the fabric of our society.

I want to talk briefly about community and say that around welfare, this government has done its worst. I suspect they could do much more, but already what they have done against the most vulnerable citizens is, in my view, a tragedy. In my constituency, staff are dealing with suicide threats from social assistance recipients. Mothers have called my office this week to tell me that they cannot afford infant formula for their babies. Now, some people might think we're making this up and some people might think that it's all right that people should suffer this way, because they don't really believe they are suffering. I tell you, our experience shows that people are suffering a great deal in those communities. Don't disregard the suffering.

Around Wheel-Trans, the government cut in funding to transportation services for people with disabilities broke a specific campaign promise. People with disability may lose their jobs because they can't get around. Many will be unable to attend medical appointments. Many will be unable to go shopping for groceries. Many will not be able to spend the many hours necessary to locate a can of 69-cent tuna. And what's worse is that this government, through the minister, is blaming Metro government for this. They cap the funding they get, cut the funding, and then they say, "But it's their fault."

What's worse, I fear—on page 5 of the Revolution it says, "We will work closely with municipalities to ensure that any actions we take will not result in increases to local property taxes." So even if municipal governments attempt to stave off the misery they're causing by raising

property taxes, they won't be able to do it because Mike Harris and their friends are going to say: "You won't be able to do that. We're going to prevent you from doing it." So municipalities that worry about their inability to take care of people in the way they want will be prevented by this government from doing so.

On employment equity, the minister says they're going to establish some equal opportunity office. They're going to get back to the merit principle. Everybody knows what that means. "Merit principle" means you're going to hire your own: the ones who look like you, the ones who sound like you, and the ones who say things like you. That's what it means.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): Stop it Rosario. Come on.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): He hit a nerve, eh?

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: That's what it means.

On the issue about crime and safety, in the throne speech, reference was made to Mr Haghgoo, who has been robbed more than a dozen times. How many more times will Mr Haghgoo be robbed as a result of this government's actions? Do you expect that by pushing the poor to the wall, we will reduce crime? Are we to believe that releasing criminals into the community with nothing but electronic bracelets to support them and protect us is better than using trained staff to supervise them? If the Premier wants to bring American-style government to this province, he can expect American-styles crimes along with a demand for prisons that can never be met.

On the issue of culture, on the issue of community, what we are creating is a great deal of human misery. What we are not looking at is the human deficit we are causing while some of you are proud to talk about how you're cutting back on the deficit.

On the issue of commerce, you've cut back the housing program. Twenty-five per cent of my community is Portuguese Canadian. They work in the construction industry. There was 69% unemployment in 1989; we reduced it by building housing. With this government's policy of cutting back, they will be unemployed. This government says: "But we've got a plan. We're going to give 30% income tax cuts to folks," which will amount to more or less a \$4-billion to \$5-billion cut, and that's what they're going to do to create jobs, 725,000.

I wonder if the public really believes that. I'm wondering whether they believe that. I don't. Most people don't believe it. That money will go back into the hands of the very wealthy. It will not go into the hands of the poor. We will not see the jobs. They won't be there. But we will be out \$4 billion to \$5 billion because we will have helped the rich get money back. It might make them feel good, it might make the members feel good, but it's certainly not going to make the victims of these cuts feel any better. It will not do it.

They are going to destroy public confidence as well. People who are fired will simply not spend and then you depress the economy even further. If you think volunteerism is going to do it, you're wrong. We're spending

billions on volunteer work already. I'm not sure we can make the stone bleed any more. Maybe they'll be lucky and they can get their corporate friends to go out and volunteer even more. I'm not sure that is an appropriate solution.

Mr Harris said, "There is nothing sacred in what we do." If that is the case, I can say that everything you are doing is profane.

Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: May I ask that you review the comments made by the member for Fort York with respect to merit and employment equity? I think he was right on the very edge of possibly slandering this entire caucus and government and clearly imputing the motives. I would ask that you review that with the idea of seeing if in fact that is the case, and ask the good member for Fort York to withdraw those things. They're very intemperate.

Mr Marchese: Mr Speaker, I would urge you to do that. There is nothing in what I said that I would take back. In fact, I would say that on the issue of merit, what everyone knows is that when you're hired for a job, there is a lot that happens in that interview process. What happens is that people will hire the ones who will sound and look like them and say the things that please them. That's what I said and I stand by that.

The Deputy Speaker: Will you please take your seat. The Chair rules that on the point of order, I was listening to the speech and I do not find anything out of order in it.

1720

Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East): I'm afraid that what I have to say, in light of what I just heard, is going to be a little unexciting. However, I will say it, in any case.

I'd like to first of all congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election and I would like to congratulate the members in the opposition as well for their election, both new and old members, and I would like to do the same to the members of my own caucus.

It is with great pleasure, and I consider it a tremendous honour, to have the privilege to address this House in this new era of hope, for in fact we have entered a new era, as evidenced by the throne speech. On June 8 this province ushered in a new Progressive Conservative government, one with a strong leader, a solid team and, most important, a blueprint for hope and for prosperity.

During the election campaign I was often asked why I got into politics. Well, I can give you a very simple answer. The things that I had been thinking about for years were the things that I saw and read in the Common Sense Revolution. I had been thinking about these things and there they were before me.

Prior to reading that document, I would sit back, like most people, and wonder in disbelief at what was going on in this province. The logic often escaped me as to why the government was doing what it was doing, and I can tell you that I was not alone in my thinking. For years I encountered people on the streets, everywhere I went in fact, who felt the same way I did. We longed for a return to the point where decisions made derived from common

sense. It is obvious that the people of Wentworth East believe in the vision of Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative government, or else we simply wouldn't be here today.

I would like to take a moment to thank the residents of Wentworth East for their faith in me and our party's vision. I can tell you that I talked to people in Glanbrook, in Binbrook, in Mount Hope, in Stoney Creek and in our little corner of Hamilton as well, over and over again, and they would all say the same thing. They would say basically, "We want to believe you, we like what you've said, we like what we've heard, but we've been let down very often in the past, so just please show us that you will follow up on what you promised to do." And I think we've been indicating and showing that we are doing exactly that. So for all those people who so desperately wanted to believe our government under the leadership of Premier Mike Harris, so far they've become believers.

In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to convey to all of you here now how proud I am to be in such fine company of the Progressive Conservative Hamilton caucus. I consider Trevor Petitt, Toni Skarica, Lillian Ross here, to be not only my colleagues but my friends as well, and I extend that same comment to all members in the Progressive Conservative caucus.

It is also my sincerest hope that I will be able to represent the constituents of Wentworth East effectively and with as much warmth and understanding as the previous Progressive Conservative member from the riding, Mr Gordon Dean. I would like to take the opportunity now to publicly thank Gordon for being a gentleman in the truest sense of the word. He is a man full of fellowship and guidance and a genuine friend.

At this time, I would also like to take the opportunity to say that I would like to thank Mr Mark Morrow, the previous NDP member, who behaved like such a gentleman during the election campaign, and I say that sincerely.

I was once told that you will only hear from the vocal opponents and never from the supporters. Well, residents from all areas of my riding have stopped me in the corner stores, in the coffee shops and everywhere and said: "You and Harris and all the others are doing a great job. Keep it up. Just don't stop." Today it's a great pleasure for me, because I can talk to the people of my area and say, "Yes, you do like what you've seen so far, and we are only just beginning."

The speech from the throne and our government's actions to date have echoed what is perhaps the most often-heard comment from Wentworth East, "If a house-hold must live within its means, then so does the government." This new government accepts and respects this philosophy. If we do not control expenditures then we will collapse under the financial burden placed upon us, our children and even our children's children.

The people of my community acknowledge that to get spending under control, it will require moral strength, it will require some personal sacrifice, some big sacrifice, but they also see that there is light at the end of the tunnel. What the government of Ontario is doing will bring hope and prosperity to families in Stoney Creek, in Glanbrook, in Hamilton, throughout the province. It will bring jobs to Hamilton, Stoney Creek, Glanbrook and again throughout the province.

Through actions started in the throne speech, the Mike Harris government is also redefining the way in which government operates, the way we do business, the way it delivers services to citizens. Too often I hear from people who have to go to four, five, six or even seven different areas for advice or for service. It's this government's intention to end this confusing maze of program delivery and duplication and offer one-stop shopping whenever and wherever possible. Again it comes back to what makes sense.

Overregulation has been and continues to be one of the biggest impediments to business. Previous governments seem to have forgotten that it is business, it is not government, that is going to be creating the jobs. Today there's new hope for business. The throne speech reflects the fundamental changes that are required to create a healthy climate in which business can grow. This growth will mean new jobs for people living in my riding and living throughout the province.

One of the first things I did as the MPP for Wentworth East was to ask small business what they needed in order to grow, and they told me in no uncertain terms that the government must scrap Bill 40, improve the Workers' Compensation Board and eliminate intrusive and unneeded red tape. This government has clearly listened and we are acting on that and more, because we are eliminating the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll, ridding the province of the corporate filing fee as well as freezing Ontario Hydro rates for the next five years.

Connected to the issue of growth and prosperity, residents and businesses alike have called on our government to continue the construction of the Red Hill Creek Expressway. For some 30 years now, and even longer, our community has fought successive governments for the completion of this transportation corridor. This expressway is essential to the economic growth of the region. Many businesses have located in the industrial parks in anticipation of the economic benefits derived from this roadway.

Once the road is complete, however, we can be assured that many, many more new businesses will be coming into the area. I am delighted to say that our Progressive Conservative government during the campaign and still today has made the commitment to complete that project.

In a balanced and well-thought-out plan the Mike Harris government is putting its financial house in order and creating an environment in which business can flourish. But there is another very crucial component of success and that is lowering taxes. This government has pledged, and the throne speech has confirmed, a commitment to cut the provincial income tax rate beginning in the budget next year.

This will mean that the average household in my community will receive a tax cut of \$3,000 or \$4,000 over the next three to four years. This money can be reintroduced into the economy, thereby stimulating muchneeded growth.

It is an honour to be in such fine company as Mike Harris and our caucus. There will be difficult times ahead—we've never said any different—and we must not be dissuaded from continuing with our course of action. We were elected for a reason: to restore faith and hope in this province while making it economically sound. I, along with my colleagues here today, accept this challenge and welcome working together with our communities to effect real, commonsense change.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): It is an honour for me as well today to stand in this place and reply to the speech from the throne. Although I was elected in a byelection almost two years ago, this is my first opportunity to speak to such a speech.

Also, I'm equally honoured to represent the riding of Essex South. For those of you who may not know, it's a small, urban-rural municipality, made up of a lot of involved citizens, where agriculture is our mainstay.

In the area of Amherstburg and the townships of Malden and Anderdon, they're steeped in the history when the conflict between the United States and Canada was fought. In the area of Kingsville and Gosfield South there are citizens who participate annually in the Jack Miner bird sanctuary celebration, which is called the Migration Festival. In Harrow and Colchester South, of course, we have one of the longest-running fairs in the province of Ontario, the good old Harrow Fair in the fall.

The town of Essex is bordered by Colchester North and Gosfield North and, as I said, it's rich in its agricultural heritage, and of course, my home area, from Leamington, Mersea township; we call it the tomato capital of Canada and the home of the H.J. Heinz Co, which I, like all loyal Leamingtonites, worked at when I first got out of school.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My wife's from Leamington, too.

Mr Crozier: My honourable colleague's wife is from Leamington, so we send good-quality citizens all over the province.

As well, we have the municipality of Pelee Island, which is the most southerly point of Canada. It's on the 42nd parallel, which is on the same parallel as Rome, Italy, and northern California. So we have a little bit of everything in Essex South and I'm proud to represent them.

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We also, it might interest you to know, have the second-largest seniors population per capita of anywhere else in Canada. So we have a lot of fine people who come to Learnington to retire and to Essex South to retire.

But what does this all signify? Why am I telling you this? Well, I want you to know that the citizens of Essex South, like many of your communities, are average Ontarians who have dreams and needs and ambitions and skills and concerns and compassion.

I agree with what's in the throne speech, particularly on page 1, where it says:

"People want jobs—for this generation and the next.

"Ontarians want value for their tax dollars and an end to government waste.

"Families want safe communities.

"We all want a sound health care system.

"Parents want schools where children learn.

"We want every Ontarian to have a fair chance at a productive, independent life."

I don't think there's anyone in this place, I don't think there's anyone in this province who would disagree with that.

But since the throne speech was given, there have been many questions asked, there have been many comments made on the throne speech. And what concerns me is not necessarily what the throne speech says but what it doesn't say.

For example, I told you how important agriculture is to my community. Agriculture only appears in the throne speech twice, and that's in connection with the labour reform. My colleague Pat Hoy from Essex-Kent yesterday gave a litany of reasons why agriculture should be an integral part of this throne speech, and it's not.

Already the government has cut \$14 million out of the agricultural budget, the second-largest employer in the province of Ontario. I do wish that you'd have another look at that, that you support agriculture. Help feed our province and our country, and the world for that matter.

Seniors: I've said that seniors are an important part of my community. The word "seniors" only appears once, just once, and it's in the context of welfare benefits.

What will happen to long-term care? It's not in the throne speech. You don't tell us what you're going to do with our seniors, what they're going to do with us, what they're going to do with you. You don't tell us that.

What are you going to do with rents? A lot of seniors in my area rent; they have apartments. Are you going to take off rent control? Seniors are on fixed incomes. What are they going to do?

What about health care? We've had quite a debate in the first week or so about health care. You say you're not cutting it. We see where you're going around the province talking to people about cutting it. Seniors in my community are concerned, and they are going to help me help remind you that you weren't going to touch a penny of health care.

Jobs: Jobs are mentioned 19 times in the throne speech. What isn't mentioned, though, is a plan on how you're going to get these 725,000 jobs. In fact, you didn't even mention the 725,000 jobs in the throne speech. I hope that's something that, notwithstanding the fact that you've chosen not to mention it in the throne speech, you won't forget.

The word "fair": I happened to look through the throne speech and I think it was mentioned twice, in context of productivity and life and in a heading that said, "A Fair Chance." But I'm not so sure that it is fair, and I'm not so sure that it ensures the needs of the citizens of the province of Ontario.

In my estimation, government spending is only shifting the money. The tax cut that represents a cost, I think, of about \$4.7 billion isn't as much a cut as it is an expense. It's an expenditure, if you like, or a lack of revenue that the government is going to have to make up.

You've said that we all have to pay for it. Well, if you're on welfare, we know already you're going to pay for it. If you live next to a hospital that's going to close, you're going to pay for it. If you rely on public transportation, you're going to pay for it. If you live in a municipality that has its transfer payments cut and the taxes go up, you're going to pay for it.

I want to refer you to my colleague Gerry Phillips's Treasury Watch of just this past September, under debt and deficits. I don't think the province of Ontario, the citizens, know this, so I want to emphasize that the government doesn't plan to balance the budget until March 31, 2001. I suspect that's beyond your mandate. It seems to me that at one time the Premier said it would be within your mandate.

The debt will grow, and I don't think you've told the citizens of Ontario this. I know the Common Sense Revolution doesn't tell the citizens of Ontario. You haven't told them that the debt is going to rise from its present \$90 billion to \$121 billion. Have you told all your residents that? I doubt it. The \$31-billion increase in the debt is represented by tax cuts. You know, the extra interest on the \$4.7 billion that you're going to give back over the period of time of your mandate is, amazingly, going to cost \$5 billion.

Someone said earlier that a bankrupt company has to look at business a different way. The Premier has said that our province is bankrupt. Those of you who have companies and are bankrupt, do you give a dividend? Then why would you give a dividend of \$5 billion?

There's a lot more to say and not much time to say it in. So I want to conclude by giving you some idea—and I'm a businessperson, like many of you; I spent 22 years as the treasurer of a company—why it is that I'm a Liberal and how I can define myself as a Liberal. My daughter helped me find this, and I appreciate her having done so. It's from a speech that David Peterson gave to Harvard University in 1989, and I'll conclude with part of what he said: "Liberalism is the philosophy that best tempers the pursuit of progress with the dictates of compassion." I'm afraid, my fellow members, there's not much compassion in here.

Mr Martin: When I was growing up there was a family I knew who solved their arguments by stepping outside and having a fight. Whoever was left standing when it was over was right. It was a simple answer to some often very complex situations, and as I stand here today I have this terrible feeling of déjà vu.

We have a province faced with some very complicated challenges and we have a government offering up some very simplistic answers. The real tragedy is that some very fragile and vulnerable people are about to receive a very bad beating. However, that is not what I have chosen to focus on in the few moments I have today. But the concerns that I have are very similar.

We have an offering of very simple solutions to some very complicated, sophisticated challenges that face us as a community of people here in Ontario today. I have this feeling of doom and destruction as I watch this government's agenda unfold, starting way back with the election itself, where I watched the Liberals and Conservatives face off in a poker game.

The stakes in this game were the jobs and services by and for the people of this province, not to mention the livelihood of the most vulnerable and the marginalized in our society.

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On any given day the ante in the game was upped and the number of jobs to be cut rose and the level of social assistance dropped, and the spectators cheered, not realizing what the game was really all about or the scope of the pain and the hurt that would be inflicted. Everyone must recognize that nothing happens to an individual member of a community or a sector of a community that does not affect the community as a whole. When any person or group in a community is under attack we are all under attack and at risk.

With the cuts that this government is inflicting we must understand that any public sector job lost is one less job in some community. One more person unemployed is just one more person competing for fewer jobs. This makes one more person dependent on the public purse, one more person less able to participate in the local economy, one more person buying less consumer goods, paying less taxes, one more person feeling less well about themselves, not to speak of the impact on the worker's immediate family and the subsequent health issues that invariably arise with feelings of inadequacy, depression and loss of hope.

Less assistance to the unemployed and the poor means less money distributed in the community in which they live. It means less money being spent at the corner grocery store, less rent being paid, fewer clothes being purchased. Money into the pockets of the poor is flow-through. It is never saved and very seldom spent someplace else.

It's much like putting gasoline in your carburetor as well as the gas tank to get your car started when you run out of gas. Let me tell you, there have been a number of communities across this province that have run out of gas from time to time, and the local communities have been very thankful for the little bit of money that does flow through the hands of those on social assistance to keep their small businesses alive.

The social and economic health of a community are intertwined and any community doing economic development or having done economic development in the last few years knows this all too well. We already know that you cannot separate the public interest from the private interest.

There is a very important role for the individual and for private enterprise, but no less role for the collective manifested in our society and effectively through government enterprise and initiative. It's crucial that there be a healthy balance between these two entities.

In my home of Sault Ste Marie we have a forum called the Round Table. This is an event where all politicians representing the various levels of government meet on a regular basis to assess and make plans around the economic and social health of our community. We recognized early in our deliberations that the greatest asset we have is our people and the most we could accomplish was to maximize this potential. We had spent years as a community waiting for that fairy godmother in the sky to come and save us. We waited for one or two big private enterprises that would come in and create wealth and prosperity and give everyone a job. It just didn't happen; we waited in vain.

You see, in Sault Ste Marie we have a mixed economy of very valuable and important public and private operations delivering goods and services. We know what they are and we know that they are interdependent. In Sault Ste Marie, as in any other city or town in Ontario, the services that a nurse administers or that a teacher gives or a bus driver provides or a doctor delivers or a custodian performs are all equally important and invaluable as they contribute in a very important way to the overall health and operation of a community in a myriad of interconnected ways.

To look at an economy that is struggling predominantly due to outside forces and declare simply and unilaterally that the way to deal with the struggle is to downsize government and give power back to corporations is to fly in the face of the experience of all of us who have been involved in community economic development, particularly over the last five years.

Nothing positive happens to the economic health of a community by taking money away from those dependent on social assistance. Nothing positive happens by reducing the number of jobs available to the unemployed in a community. Giving money to large corporations has not created and does not create massive job opportunities.

We have a global economy all around us now that requires all of us to give the best that we have to offer. It does not get us anywhere if we walk into the school yard and pummel the hell out of the little guy. Bullying is not achieving anything, any more than it did when I was growing up.

Government is a fundamental determinant of economic activity. Cutting expenditures leads to a drop in revenue, which in turn leads to greater job losses. Blaming the problem on the victim as opposed to recognizing that the system has failed to create enough jobs just creates a double jeopardy for those most vulnerable and attacks the community, while at the same time lessening its ability to care for itself.

I would like to return for a brief moment to the experience of Sault Ste Marie and how at its darkest hour, when the forces of the marketplace had given us a very bleak prognosis of our economic future, the citizens, both public sector and private sector, worked together to put fresh air in our sails.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): Mr Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to have this opportunity to comment briefly during the debate on the speech from the

throne. At this time too I would like to add my personal congratulations on your election to the office of Speaker.

During the recent election campaign, the people of Durham-York told me our province has been on the wrong track and something has to be done about it. I believe if we are to fix the problems in this province, government must be prepared to make some tough decisions. That is the message we received on June 8. The people elected us to change the status quo, to put our problems behind us and get Ontario moving again. We asked for that job, we were given that job and we accept that responsibility.

I want to take this opportunity to voice my sincere thanks to the people of Durham-York who expressed their overwhelming support and confidence in me on June 8.

With the first sitting of the Legislature now under way, the new government has the opportunity to proceed with the major changes we promised during the election campaign. With the focus of attention now turned to the Legislature, the people of Durham-York may be wondering what course of action the new government will take. The answer is simple. We are going to do what we said we would do: restore hope and prosperity for the people of Ontario.

None of our decisions are easy or are taken lightly, but working together and drawing on the strengths of this province, Ontario can and will live up to its potential. We can and will build a better and brighter future. Getting our finances in order is not an end in itself. It is only the start of the process of reigniting our economy. We are all in this together. We must all share in the sacrifices if we are to share in the gains achieved by getting Ontario back on track.

We want people to feel comfortable with our message. We need them to join with us in a new partnership. The key to any successful partnership, whether it involves business or government, has been innovation, applying knowledge in a new and more productive way. Sometimes this has meant using new knowledge or technologies and taking a commonsense approach to business and government operations and activities. Most of all, innovation requires an attitude, a willingness to embrace new thinking, to explore new ways of doing things and never to accept the status quo as the best you can do.

I believe that kind of thinking is the key not only to our new economy but to the kinds of major changes in government operations that we have been elected to bring to Ontario. In other words, the success of this province's business sector is not only inspiring other Ontario companies to look for better solutions and new opportunities, it is also pointing the way for the public sector to achieve higher levels of service at lower costs to Ontarians.

1750

We must stay on track because hardworking, taxpaying, law-abiding Ontarians expect our government to live up to its commitments: smaller government, job-creating tax cuts, an end to discriminatory job quotas and real welfare reform. We will not let them down. We will not let them lose confidence in us.

My constituents have told me that any change in Durham-York must be a true reflection of change that is occurring throughout Ontario. They told me they want their government, all levels of government, to balance growth with lifestyle.

Governments, business and individuals must join in a new partnership to make our province and our communities attractive places to live, raise families and do business. Rather than government formulating Toronto-based solutions to the problems of rural areas, it must recognize that small towns have concerns and issues that are distinct from those of larger urban regions, especially in the areas of planning, resource development and the environment.

The people of Durham-York told me they want their provincial government to offer a true partnership which provides more flexibility to rural municipalities. It is a partnership that gives local councils and residents more control over how they use their resources and more local input into the provincial decision-making process. My constituents told me membership on any task force examining the GTA must include fair representation from small towns in Durham-York. The people of Durham-York know that rural Ontario is not a homogeneous region where municipalities have uniform priorities. Individual rural municipalities must not be limited in their options for determining appropriate growth and development strategies.

With the speech from the throne on September 27, the government outlined its plans to restore hope and prosperity for the people of Ontario. The government is setting priorities and sticking to them. The government is charting a new course and launching a program of job creation by cutting taxes, reducing government spending and freeing the private sector to create jobs.

In the throne speech, the Premier said Ontarians are a generous people working to make their communities better places to live. He directed me, as his parliamentary assistant, to lead a government initiative to support and nurture the spirit of volunteerism in the province. I welcome this opportunity.

The mandate given this government represents a rejection of institutionalized big government and a return to the belief that we all can be more self-reliant and accept more personal responsibility. We cannot continue to expect government to do everything. Again, there must be a new partnership. Setting new directions for fiscal responsibility means there will be more emphasis placed on individual responsibilities.

Our communities could not function without the dedicated work and fine ethics of volunteers who give so much of their time and energy. Volunteers have a long-standing history of deriving personal satisfaction and a sense of wellbeing by putting aside their own interests and doing something to benefit others. Volunteers make a commitment to the less fortunate. Volunteers make a commitment to our communities. They express their commitment in a variety of ways, according to their means and abilities. Volunteers share their expertise, energy and time. They don't volunteer because they seek personal reward; they volunteer because they care.

I invite my colleagues here in the Legislature, their many constituents across the province of Ontario and the thousands of volunteers who already contribute so much of their effort, time and expertise to join me in a non-partisan effort to promote and encourage volunteerism.

Mr Baird: I appreciate the opportunity to rise in this House. If you had said a few short months ago that I could get up and give a maiden speech on the government side of the House as a Progressive Conservative, with no Liberals, it would have seemed just too good to be true.

I welcome the opportunity to rise in this House in support of the direction this government is taking over the next five years, as expressed in last week's speech from the throne. As many have commented, this direction was very clearly laid out and spelled out in the Common Sense Revolution, and it is very consistent with my own commitments as a candidate in the riding of Nepean.

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on your election. As any parliamentarian knows, your leadership, discipline and good humour are all equally important to the sound workings of this Legislature, and we're very honoured to have you as our Speaker.

I also want to pay tribute to some of my predecessors as the member for Nepean: Hans Daigeler, Bob Mitchell, Sid Handleman and Eskine Johnson. Their commitment to their community and hard work on the community's behalf over many, many years has been greatly appreciated by people in my community and has provided a great benchmark for me to work hard to follow. Their character has greatly influenced my own.

Having grown up in Nepean, I want to give credit to two of our former federal members. Walter Baker, who served my riding for many years, is still greatly respected some 10 years after his death. Bill Tupper served as a great mentor to me over the years. It is a great honour to follow in their footsteps and represent the people of Nepean. It is a tremendous privilege bestowed on all members of this House, I believe, and I want to thank my constituents personally for the trust and confidence that they placed in me on election day. I'll try very hard over the next five years to work hard to earn that confidence every day.

I'd like also to thank the experienced member for Carleton, who has been a great help and advice to me over the last year, and particularly thank the members for Ottawa Centre and Ottawa West, who've been very free to provide me with advice. While we disagree on many issues, we'll certainly try to work together when it can help the residents of Ottawa-Carleton. We're all working to try to make our region and our province a better place in which to live.

The late, great former Prime Minister John George Diefenbaker once advised young parliamentarians when he said: "For the first six months after you are here, you will wonder how you got here. Then, after that, you will wonder how the rest of the members got here." I'm a big student of Diefenbakerism.

In their maiden speeches some years ago, my predecessors Bob Mitchell and Sid Handleman both made

passing references to the rivers, streams, hills and valleys of the riding and a newly created and vibrant city within it, the city of Nepean.

The rivers and streams are just as blue, the hills and valleys just as green, and I believe the city is just as vibrant and fresh as it was then.

The Nepean I know, have known all my life, has been quiet, clean, decent, secure and reasonably prosperous. The standard of living and opportunities we've come to expect as a community cannot be taken for granted. Wasteful spending and spiralling deficits threaten government's ability to pay for things that really matter in our community, things like education and health care and law enforcement.

Nepean residents know that education facilities are needed to ensure that young people can get a productive start in life. This is a real problem, particularly for the community of Barrhaven in my riding, and that's an issue that has my ongoing concern, as they laid out to me so clearly during the election campaign.

You can understand the concern of hardworking taxpayers when, in the past, valuable, hard-earned tax dollars were dedicated to such things as seventh-inning stretches in major league baseball games. I was at a baseball game not long ago when a guy said to me: "Why should taxpayers pay for this? Why should I work hard to pay for a seventh-inning stretch at a for-profit baseball game?" I looked at that guy and I said, "I agree."

In a speech 15 years ago, one of my predecessors, Bob Mitchell, who's been a good friend to me over the years, also referred to the microelectronics industry emerging in the Ottawa-Carleton area. In 1981 there were 80 high-tech companies stationed in the region. Today the number has grown to almost 630, employing over 34,000 people in my region.

In a very real sense, the valleys that Mr Mitchell spoke about so eloquently years ago have really become the Silicon Valley of the north, both in my constituency and in the neighbouring constituency of Carleton. Some of these companies are among the world leaders in information technologies, biosciences and aerospace. The largest of these employers, Bell-Northern Research and Northern Telecom, have one of the most up-to-date scientific research facilities and telecommunications research centres in North America in Nepean. We're very proud of that and the jobs it brings to our community.

1800

In the past decade, my constituents have watched Ontario's transformation from the economic engine of Canada, a magnet for jobs, investment and opportunity; they've watched it slip into a mismanaged debtor, a province that's overgoverned and overregulated and overtaxed, and they want that changed. The change this government has in store for Ontario will foster a better climate for investment, quality education to improve the skills of our workforce, less government bureaucracy and red tape so that small business can compete successfully and so that we can lower taxes to create hope and opportunity.

Repealing Bill 40 and restoring balance to labour legislation I believe will encourage investment and job creation in Ontario, something so key and so important to our future as a province. These changes will create jobs in the private sector—the private sector, which fuels our economy. These changes that will be brought in by the Harris government will remind all Ontarians that there is reward for initiative, investment and hard work in this province.

In order to further facilitate growth and opportunity in this area, our party made a very clear commitment to building Highway 416 to Ottawa-Carleton, a project that's been talked about for some 20 years. It's amazing that a region with just under a million people would not have a four-lane highway linking it, and that's been a real concern for people in my constituency: a concern about regional development, about isolation, a concern for safety. That's a top priority for our government and one that I'm pleased we rededicate ourselves to.

But to give credit where credit is due, while this project was talked about for many years, it was only when the former government, the NDP, took power that they even began construction. The part in Nepean is just about complete, and people in my constituency were very grateful for the previous government's effort in that regard. That was I guess evidenced by the 9% of the vote they got.

As I walked back to my office from the Legislature last night, I passed a mother and her sick child going into the Hospital for Sick Children, and I wondered, if we let runaway government spending get out of control and continue to be out of control, five and 10 years from now will there be any money for health care? If we let out-of-control government spending continue, what will our education and university system look like when that child wants to go to university? When we continue to spend money the way we have over the last 10 years, I wonder what kind of future will be in store for that child and others when they graduate.

The tough decisions we're taking today to ensure the provincial government's ability to pay for things that really matter, for things that are very important like police and firefighters, these cuts we're making will guarantee long-term prosperity and protect those things that are very important to us. I want to be able to look back at this woman in 10 years' time and know we made the tough decisions that protected the services that were very important for her family and for her child.

Now, the opposition would have us believe that we're making these changes simply out of a form of ideology,

and I believe that's not the case whatsoever. We're sticking to a plan that we researched and planned for many years in opposition, a plan that we presented to the people of Ontario some 18 months ago. The honourable member for Beaches-Woodbine is laughing. We presented this plan 18 months ago to tell people very clearly and succinctly where we stood, because the people of Ontario wanted a clear direction and elected our government to provide that direction. That's the plan people voted for and everyone on my side of the House has rededicated themselves to it. I'm very privileged to work with a caucus that is so committed to one mission and one goal: returning Ontario to prosperity.

I believe one of the major reasons that I personally was elected was because Mike Harris, our leader at the time, had the courage of his convictions to put out a plan for job creation and economic development, had the courage to put that plan in writing early, before the election, so a group of men and women could stand for election on that basis and be clear to people on what we said we would do. I believe the endorsement we received on election day was for real change—not tinkering, but real change.

The people of Nepean and across this province recognize that difficult decisions, sometimes tough decisions, must be made to restore hope and opportunity and employment in this province. The people of Nepean fully understand Ontario's financial situation and the threat it poses to the quality of life in this province.

Ontario is a ship that has lost its way, and we have been asked to put it back on course. There's a very popular radio talk show host in Ottawa-Carleton named Lowell Green, and he refers to the provincial government's affairs as being in a "Mayday, mayday" situation. I couldn't disagree more. We're all dedicating ourselves to getting that ship in gear. Even our critics can see that we need to balance Ontario's budget. However, they say we're moving too quickly, doing too much too soon. I want to know how long they think Ontario should sweep its greatest challenge under the carpet. If the cuts are deep, it's because they should have been made long ago.

The people of Nepean sent a clear message every day to me: Get Ontario's affairs in order to protect our standard of living, rejuvenate our economy, create jobs and secure hope and opportunity, which was once synonymous with the province of Ontario. That's our goal, our purpose and our responsibility.

The Speaker: It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until next Tuesday at 1:30.

The House adjourned at 1806.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
6	129	2	58	I remember how Willy and Susan Sanford allowed me

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First Session, 36th Parliament

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Tuesday 10 October 1995

Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

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Mardi 10 octobre 1995



Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 10 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 10 octobre 1995

The House met at 1332. Prayers.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Mr Speaker, I rise to seek the consent of the House to rearrange the routine proceedings for today only. This will have the House consider oral question period now, after which will follow members' statements, followed by the remainder of routine proceedings in their proper order.

I would ask the consent of the House that if there are any recorded divisions today on the conclusion of the throne speech debate, those divisions be deferred until Monday next, immediately following routine proceedings and before orders of the day, with the previously agreed upon division bells limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, may I also seek unanimous consent of the House for a few moments to express our sympathy to the Eves family.

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

JUSTIN EVES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Quite clearly at a moment like this words are absolutely inadequate to express what we're all feeling, but all the members of my caucus wanted to join in expressing our sincere sympathy to Ernie Eves and to the members of his family in the tragic loss of their son and brother.

I think each of us who is a parent can only begin to imagine the kind of anguish that the family is experiencing, but we did want them to know today that they are in the thoughts and prayers of all of us here in this Legislature.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I'm sure that all of us have an extraordinary sense of sadness and loss. The member for Parry Sound, Ernie Eves, is a good friend to a great many of us in this House. He's certainly been a good friend of mine over the years, and when I had the chance to speak to him on Saturday, I simply expressed a very few inadequate words which I would share with the House.

All of us have, at different times in our lives, experienced great sadness and great loss, and we know that life sometimes has a way of breaking our hearts. This is what's happened to Ernie and to Vicki and to Natalie in their loss of Justin. We can only hope that the passage of time and the reaching out by all of us, and indeed by thousands of people across the province, as well as the

support of close friends and family, will help Ernie and all the members of his family get through this very difficult moment. We share our thoughts and prayers with the Eves family on this occasion.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Let me thank the leaders of both of the parties who have expressed sentiments.

This is a very difficult time for the Eves family, a difficult time for those of us who are close to the Eves family, and I think the leader of the New Democratic Party is quite correct that he is a very good friend and colleague to all who know him in the Legislature.

This kind of tragedy hits us all from time to time, directly or indirectly, family or friends, but when it happens very close there's some strength that comes from somewhere. I happen to believe it comes from God, others will believe that it comes from another source, but it comes. As I met with the family yesterday, there was a strength there; I don't understand how it comes. Mr Eves expressed to all of you who have sent well wishes, who have called, who have offered support, their thanks.

I thought it would be appropriate that I say a few words about Justin. As difficult as this is for me, it would be more difficult for his father and I think it's something we want to know.

This young man, at age 23, was a loving son. He was somebody who cared very much about people—about his friends, his relatives, his family, his community. He overcame adversity, a learning disability, with the help of friends and the support of family. He was able to attend Boston College, which has one of the best programs in North America for children with learning disabilities—dyslexia. He overcame that. He was successful.

While studying in Boston, he still had time to be a Big Brother to two inner-city kids. He was very special to these boys who for a period of time, for four or five months, carried on—one just a teenager, I believe, one not yet a teenager—before any adult knew that they were on their own. He continued to help these boys in a Big Brother capacity after having left Boston.

I might add that the federal government assisted in making sure that if they wanted to attend the funeral, they could; these are two boys who don't have birth certificates or passports or travel documents. That gives you some sense of the despairing situation that, because they knew Justin, they've overcome. There are many others, of course, who are still facing those situations.

But this was a small measure of who he was and how special he was, of helping people. He's going to be very much missed, I believe, by those who will never have had the opportunity to know him or meet him. I think that he would have sent ripples through his community because of his very caring and very sharing way.

I say these things today—I think his parents would want me to—so that others can pick up and learn from this tragedy, that others can share the spirit of Justin. The family has asked and friends have asked to not send flowers, to set up a trust fund in Justin's name to help children with learning disabilities. I think this is a worthwhile cause and it will be one way that he can be remembered.

His mother asked me to pass on to all of us and to all the people we know that while nobody will know for sure whether, if Justin had worn his seatbelt, he'd still be with us or not—two of the three in the car wore their seatbelts and are walking around today; Justin did not and he is not—his mother somehow or other found the courage to tell me to make sure I had my seatbelt on all the time and to pass that one message on to you and to everybody I had a chance to talk to.

The family extends their deep thanks and their appreciation, and on behalf of my caucus and our party I want to indicate publicly how saddened we all are. I'm just astounded at the strength of this family. Even yesterday they were talking about lessons that could be learned, and that would be the best way we could pay our respects to Justin.

1340

ORAL QUESTIONS SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): As I rise I recognize the fact that it is somewhat difficult for us all to move into the routine proceedings of the House today. Nevertheless I do have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services.

I want to note that last week the minister indicated he would fix one of the promises which had been broken and would make sure that people who are on social assistance and have had their welfare benefits reduced will be able to earn back the full amount of their welfare benefits before their income is clawed back. We'll look forward to the details of how he's going to correct that.

But today I want to ask the minister about another broken promise. It states categorically in the Common Sense Revolution that the government will not cut support for seniors and the disabled. It specifically states in the throne speech that "...welfare benefits for seniors, persons with disabilities and their families have not been reduced."

Yet in fact, according to the government's own figures, more than 17,000 seniors and disabled people on general welfare assistance did have their benefits cut last month. It's clear, and I say to this minister, you're in such a hurry to make the cuts you have to make that you're quite willing to overlook yet another promise. Will you acknowledge today that even as the throne speech said that welfare benefits for seniors and the disabled had not been reduced, you were cutting the welfare benefits of some 17,000 seniors and disabled in this province?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): This government appreciates the importance of this issue and this is why the government

has taken the time to examine all the options before taking action. We remain committed to moving seniors and the disabled off the welfare system. They don't belong there. We are going to set up an income supplement program that's better designed to meet their needs.

Mrs McLeod: The question was, is it not so that 17,000 seniors and disabled had their welfare benefits reduced this month in direct violation of the statement in the throne speech that those benefits were not being cut? We know in fact that has happened. We wanted the minister to acknowledge the violation of the statement that was made in the throne speech.

We also know how much the government is saving by cutting the benefits of seniors and disabled who are on welfare assistance. It amounts to what I think is a rather staggering figure; it amounts to some \$10 million a month. The waiting time for moving people from welfare assistance to family benefits so that they would not be still experiencing the reduced income is getting longer and longer. It's anywhere from eight to nine months. We've even heard of cases which go back a matter of over a year. So more than 17,000 seniors and disabled people have had their benefits cut, waiting to be able to restore their income, and in the meantime the ministry is saving \$10 million a month.

Minister, will you confirm at least that you are indeed saving \$10 million a month on the backs of seniors and the disabled?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: During this transition period we are committed to protecting the system for people who are truly disabled and for seniors. We also need a clearer vision as to who these people are and we're reviewing this. At this time, no decisions have been made, but I might add that we have allocated more resources in order to process people.

Mrs McLeod: It's interesting that the minister notes a transitional period, because we've all come to have some real questions about what kind of transition he and his government in fact are looking at. We don't see the protection for seniors and disabled in the interim period because we know that the welfare benefits have been cut. We were shocked to learn, and the minister has mentioned it again today, that they're looking at determining who are the disabled who should be qualifying for family benefits. We ask, Minister, how many more millions of dollars are you planning to save on the backs of the disabled by coming up with some new definition? How far are you prepared to go in making the disabled of this province pay for your Premier's income-tax-cut promise?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I would like to reconfirm this system must be protected for the disabled and the seniors. They are among the most vulnerable in our society. Frankly, we talk about compassion: Is it compassionate to let the status quo continue when obviously if that status quo does continue there won't be anything left for people who are truly vulnerable in this province?

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question, the member for Hamilton East.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is also to the Minister of Community and Social Services,

and it concerns the impact of your cutbacks on the disabled. Last week, in response to a question regarding the redefinition of "disability," you stated: "You have to define 'disability.' We've clearly gone to a medical definition of 'disability,' and unfortunately that's what the catchment is going to be."

According to ministry figures, there are currently more than 144,000 disabled people who receive the disability allowance. Officials in your ministry say that under your definition 115,000 disabled people and their families will become ineligible for this allowance. That would mean that 80% of the people who now receive disability allowance in Ontario will become ineligible. These disabled people and their families would then be pushed on to general welfare assistance, which means their benefits would be cut by approximately 40%.

Can the minister confirm that it is planned to change the definition of "disability" under the act and in the process eliminate disability allowance for approximately 115,000 disabled people in Ontario who now receive this assistance?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: This question is very similar to the one that was just posed to me by the leader of the official opposition. I must say once again that we do need a clearer vision of the people who are disabled. We're reviewing that right now, and no decisions have been made.

Mr Agostino: I think the minister's own words in the House last week gave us the real answer, that you're moving to define a strict definition of "medical disability"; you're planning to break your promise and slash benefits to the disabled and their families by approximately 40%.

In dollars and cents, under your changes, a disabled individual would lose \$410 a month from the benefits they're now receiving. A disabled person with a spouse and one child would lose \$552 per month. In total, under your definition that you spoke of last week, you'll remove 115,000 disabled people and their families from the allowance. The province and your government would save \$787 million a year on the backs of the disabled and the most vulnerable in this province with your proposed redefinition and change.

Will the minister confirm finally now that he is breaking his commitment to protect the disabled in this province and also confirm that as a result of the changes there would be a savings of \$787 million by eliminating the disability allowance from the 115,000 people who now qualify?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I find it very interesting that the honourable member is talking about a definition that, as I just stated a couple of seconds ago, no decisions have been made on in terms of what the definition is going to be composed of.

I will once again confirm that we are committed to protecting the system for the disabled, that, once again, we have to truly protect the system for the truly disabled, and that's really what we have to do to fix the system.

Mr Agostino: It's becoming more difficult to try to understand the philosophy and where this government's

coming from in this issue. I go back to what you said last week, Mr Minister: "We've clearly gone to a medical definition of 'disability,' and unfortunately that's what the catchment is going to be." They were your words last week, Minister, not mine. You have gone to a medical definition of "disability" and that is what the catchment is going to be. That's what you told the House.

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You are now trying to justify a betrayal of your party's commitment and your Premier's commitment not to reduce funding for the disabled. By your move you're significantly going to reduce the funding by approximately 40%, you're going to save \$787 million a year and you're going to make 115,000 disabled people ineligible. That to me is a clear betrayal of your commitment, and what you're simply doing is saying, "Well, we're not really betraying them, we're moving them somewhere else," where you were going to reduce their benefits by 40%.

I'll try to make it as simple as I can. Minister, will you give us your definition of "disabled," and when is a person sufficiently disabled to receive disability benefits in the province of Ontario under your ministry guidelines?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I must agree, that is a good question. That's the same one that was just asked of me two seconds ago. Clearly, as we've said, we're looking for a clearer definition of what disabled is, and clearly I've said as well that we haven't decided on a definition, regardless of what the honourable member would like to attribute. I would like to confirm again that this government has a commitment to protect the most vulnerable in this society, which means the disabled—the truly disabled.

The Speaker: New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): To the same minister, if I could have his—I know he's getting instructions from the Premier, so I'll wait for those instructions to end and then I'll ask the question, if that's all right. I want to make sure I have your undivided attention. When the prompting stops, I'll start.

The Speaker: Proceed with your question, please.

Mr Rae: All right.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The leader of the third party with his question.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Could we get the time back, Mr Speaker?

The Speaker: I have nothing to do with that. Order. The leader of the third party.

Mr Rae: If the minister will turn to page 10 of the Common Sense Revolution, he will see at the top of page 10 there is a section entitled "Seniors and the Disabled." Describing welfare reform, it says:

"Another important step in welfare reform will be to move 170,000 of our citizens—seniors and the disabled—out of the 'welfare system' altogether. They should never have been there in the first place.

"We will establish a new and separate income supplement program, specifically for those unable to work." "Specifically for those unable to work." And this is in bold print: "Funding for this program will be guaranteed at current levels. Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut."

My question for the minister is, how does he square that promise with the statements that are being made with respect to a redefinition of "disability" and to the fact that under the proposal for a redefinition of "disability" people in fact will be moved out of the family benefits program into the general welfare program and will have their benefits cut? How do you square what you promised to do in the Common Sense Revolution with what you are now telling people you're planning to do in redefining "disability," in redefining the problem and in depriving thousands of people of benefits to which they are now legally entitled?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I want to confirm once again that we remain committed to moving the seniors and the disabled off the current welfare system. Seniors and disabled should not be on the welfare system. That's part of what was being asked. Certainly they deserve the dignity of not being there. Secondly, we have committed to create an income supplement program in order to assist them, being off the system.

I must add, let's not forget that the eligibility and the definitions have all been expanded in the prior five years, and I think what we really have to look at is who is truly disabled in this province. That's what our challenge is going to be.

Mr Rae: Let me just say that there's no reference in the Common Sense Revolution to redefining "disability." There's no reference in the Common Sense Revolution to cutting the benefits of people who are now receiving disability payments, no reference to that at all. In fact it says, "Funding for this program will be guaranteed at current levels." So the clear implication of that is that people will be maintained in their current condition.

I'd like to ask the minister: Will he state categorically, is it the intention of the government to redefine "disability," and can the minister confirm that as a result of this redefinition people will be moved out of the income supplement family benefits program back into the welfare system? Is that what you're planning to do?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I would like to confirm again that we have as our priority in this government the seniors and the disabled.

Since the leader of the third party so likes to quote from the Common Sense Revolution, it also says here, "Improved management techniques, stricter eligibility requirements and fraud reduction will save" the taxpayers money.

Now, the point here is that we have a commitment to make sure that those who are truly vulnerable in this province will be protected, and that means the truly disabled.

Mr Rae: The minister hasn't answered my question, which is a very simple question. I asked him very simply this: Are you planning to redefine "disability," yes or

no—it's a very simple question—and secondly, as a result of that redefinition, will the number of people who are on family benefits go up or will it go down? Which is it?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Earlier on, in answer to a question by the Leader of the Opposition, I indicated that we are committed to protecting the system for people who are truly disabled. But we also said that we need a clearer vision in terms of who the disabled really are, and we're reviewing this. I indicated already to the Leader of the Opposition, also again, that we are reviewing it and no decisions have been made at this time.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Bob Rae (York South): My question is to the Minister of Health, following the announcements that were made on Friday: A number of us were I think quite surprised at the extent to which the cuts which were announced on Friday included so much of community health. We clearly understood that while there was going to be restructuring, there were not going to be across-the-board cuts which would affect people in the community.

I want to ask the minister if he can explain why so many community services have been cut: long-term care, the delay in the establishment of planned services, the birthing centres, community mental health, home oxygen, to mention just a few. Can you explain why community health has received such a large portion of the cuts allocated in your ministry?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank the member for York South for the question. I just want to make very clear that of the administrative savings that have been found in my ministry there are no cuts, I say to the honourable member, to front-line services.

If you'd like to take the oxygen program, for example, which was erroneously reported one day last week in the Star, and there was a correction done on the weekend, you will note that as of some criteria that were being enforced by the previous NDP government, some \$8 million was left in that budget unspent. The other \$2 million, for a \$10-million saving, we expect to save this year as a result of the enforcement of the NDP's criteria.

Mr Rae: Let me just remind the minister that on page 7 of the Common Sense Revolution, in bold print—

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): You read that more than anything.

Mr Rae: Well, unless members are arguing across the way that the devil made them do it, I think we have to read from this document because it's the only explanation we have for much of what appears to drive the members opposite.

Mr Stockwell: I just said you read that more than anything.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Etobicoke West is out of order.

Mr Rae: They worship at the shrine of their Common Sense Revolution, yet they object when I read from it. I don't quite understand. I would think that they'd want me to read from it.

If the member will turn to page 7 of the CSR, as it's now affectionately called, it says, "Health care: We will

not cut health care spending." No ifs, ands or buts, it's in bold print. It's pretty straightforward, not too many qualifications there. "It's far too important" is the next phrase. That's in italics; the printers were working overtime. "And frankly, as we all get older, we are going to need it more and more."

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We understand that, and that's why I don't understand—to repeat the point quite simply—why the strategy of the government is to continue cutting in capital allocation in community health care and cutting in services in community health care. I'd like to ask the minister to explain to me how it is possible for him to say that no front-line services will be affected when the level of cuts to community care is upwards of \$50 million this year.

Hon Mr Wilson: I fully explained to the media and to members of this House that there are no cuts to front-line services in health care, and I would ask the honourable member for York South to read on on page 7 in the Common Sense Revolution which says, "Under this plan, health care spending will be guaranteed," and it is. This is the important part, and it's actually in bold, members should know:

"As government, we will be aggressive about rooting out waste, abuse, health card fraud, mismanagement and duplication.

"Every dollar we save by cutting overhead or by bringing in the best new management techniques and thinking will be reinvested in health care to improve services to patients. We call this commonsense approach, 'patient-based budgeting.'"

I'm very proud of this document. Our government is very proud of this document, and we are living up to our health care commitments to the people of Ontario.

Mr Rae: Perhaps I could just ask the minister this then: He's saying that somehow they've managed to take out \$128 million in funding, to which they've now added even more in the announcements that have been made most recently, including community mental health; the chemical addiction program; birthing centres; long-term care, community-based services, \$33 million; delay in the establishment of planned community services, \$2 million; reduction in the home oxygen program of \$10 million, which is close to \$50 million; and a further \$16.1 million in capital funding that is necessary to move services into the community.

I'd like to ask the minister, how is the community going to be able to absorb the increased demand for services in the community when you've already indicated to all and sundry that hospital budgets are going to be slashed next year and slashed again the year after? You can't slash both in the community and in the institutions at the same time. It can't be done without breaking the promises you've made and the commitments you've made to seniors, the commitments you've made to people who are sick and who need care at home. They either are going to get it at home or they're going to get it in the hospital. Where are they going to get care once we're done with all these cuts?

Hon Mr Wilson: Again I reiterate to the member for York South that at the time we wrote the Common Sense Revolution, our commitment in the Common Sense Revolution was to seal the health care envelope. We've done that. I think the honourable member will want to agree with us that, unlike previous governments who said they were going to save money in a particular envelope and reinvest it later, they didn't come up with the actual savings.

So we're showing the people of Ontario as we go along where we found administrative savings and we're also making reinvestment announcements in priority areas and setting priorities within the health care envelope. That's our commitment. We'll continue to do that.

With respect to the \$33 million that the honourable member talks about in community services, that, you should know, is the fact that I put your multiservice agency bureaucratic red-tape plan on hold. So the \$33 million is sitting there. We will reinvest that in long-term care in the communities once we bring out our plan to go forward on long-term-care services in this province.

We did the people of Ontario a favour by cancelling your MSA unionization drive, and I'm proud of that decision by this government.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): My question is to the Attorney General, but firstly I want to congratulate him on his re-election and appointment to cabinet. We shared the critic responsibilities in the last Parliament, so I know he'll be very sympathetic to the question I have for him today.

Minister, one year ago yesterday Albert Moses was killed in Toronto by a police officer's bullet. Today family members came to Queen's Park to tell the world that neither the special investigations unit nor Toronto police are able to break a gridlock of silence to tell them exactly how or why Albert Moses was killed. The police officer involved refuses to answer questions, in contravention of the Police Services Act, which requires him to answer SIU questions. Of course, like many before him, the officer cites charter rights against self-incrimination. This impasse has been deadlocking many SIU investigations under the existing protocol and will continue to do so under any protocol that you may install. It definitely requires a judicial interpretation.

My question to you is this: Will you seek a court reference to determine to what extent a police officer's obligation to answer questions under the Police Services Act is reduced or extinguished under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms? Unless you do that, we're going to continue to be plagued by this gridlock and deadlock, this play between police, public and victims.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The special investigations unit has been a source of difficulty in terms of the way it has operated for some time. As a result, there was a change in the director of that body some time—I believe it was last March. At that time there was a huge backlog in SIU cases that had not yet been investigated. I'm pleased to report to this House that almost every

single case that was tied up in that backlog has now been resolved.

Unfortunately, this case has not yet been resolved. I'm hopeful that the SIU director, Dana Venner, who has successfully—and is only there, I might add, as a temporary director because she doesn't want to stay in the position indefinitely. She took this on as a special task and has virtually cleaned up the list, and I know that she is continuing to pursue this particular matter and attempting to investigate it to the end.

Mr Chiarelli: We certainly would have appreciated hearing what the minister intends for the SIU, which we didn't hear today. However, in the same case there's another very serious issue which arises.

A year ago blood samples were sent to the government Centre of Forensic Sciences, and almost a year later the same Dana Venner you referred to, the acting director, sent a letter to the chief of police in Toronto stating that even after this year it's going to be quite some time before they obtain the results from the Centre of Forensic Sciences here in Ontario.

You also know, Minister, that it took over two years in the Bernardo case to get DNA results back. In addition, we saw only yesterday that the OPP are claiming that in standard blood samples from accident victims it's taking up to or longer than six months to get these very routine samples back.

Minister; I'd like you to tell the people of Ontario whether you feel that justice is being served with the level of service being given by the Centre of Forensic Sciences in the province of Ontario at the present time.

Hon Mr Harnick: I find the question, while important, rather a strange question since it has absolutely no connection with the question that the member initially asked me. What I will tell the member is that that area of the forensic science labs is not an area under the control of the Attorney General. I am not responsible for that. It is an issue that involves the Ministry of the Solicitor General, and I would suggest that the member ask his question to the Solicitor General at the appropriate time.

CHILDREN'S AID SERVICES

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I have a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services regarding the cutbacks to the children's aid societies across the province. I'm sure the minister is aware that the Halton CAS has laid off four social workers and the rest of the staff have gone on a four-day workweek, which means an additional 20% cutback, that Frontenac CAS has cut back three and a half social workers, that Durham has had layoffs, that Hastings has laid off four and a half social workers and Thunder Bay 10.

Does the minister not recognize that children's aid societies and the social workers have a statutory obligation to fulfil the Child and Family Services Act and that they have a basic obligation in this province to protect the most vulnerable children in this province, children who are physically and sexually abused? What kind of impact statements have you done and what assurance do

you have personally that no child will be put at risk and that every one of the sections of the Child and Family Services Act, in terms of visits and responses to complaints, will be met in this province and that no child will be put at risk?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I thank the honourable member for the question, because I strongly believe this is an important issue for us all. That's why this government is protecting services for the children most in need. I might add that we are continuing to fund this area by more than \$700 million a year. Incidentally, we're also providing funding for up to 70,000 child care spaces to help families with genuine needs.

Mr Cooke: That doesn't answer the question at all. The fact is that children's aid social workers have an obligation, just as police do in this province, to uphold the law. Your party and your government have said there will be no cutbacks in the justice field. I understand and accept that commitment. But what about those who are empowered under the law to protect children who are being physically and sexually abused? What are you doing to protect those children?

There are all sorts of cutbacks, 5% and 6% in cutbacks. Children's aid societies, if you'd bother to pick up the phone and talk to them, will tell you they are not meeting the requirements under the act. There was even a story in the Globe a couple of weeks of ago from the Halton society, saying they are receiving complaints about the response times to calls about abuse.

What are you going to do to make sure that children who are being abused are protected? They are not being now, because of your cutbacks.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: We are protecting programs for our core services for the most vulnerable in our society. We're funding more than \$2 billion in terms of social programs to help people in need.

We're bringing our spending under control, or else we're not going to have enough in the future to help those who truly need our assistance. Our government believes that there are efficiencies out there, that we must all do more for less. This government is confident that these agencies and community groups will find more efficient and innovative ways to deliver their services. This government is committed to preserving key services for those most in need.

SELF-REGULATION

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. I understand that your ministry is looking at self-regulation for a number of industries. Travel agents in my constituency have contacted me concerning self-regulation of their industry. Can you please tell me if your ministry has made any decisions in this respect?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): The travel sector is one of the many businesses regulated by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Since our government has come to power, we have discovered that there are many things the private sector can do on its own. One of

them is to be involved in the regulation of their own industry.

The travel industry has shown a maturity whereby it is now in a position to step into the shoes of some parts of self-management. We have met with them. We have thrown to them various ideas with regard to self-management. We think it's a way to get government out of their hair, and they agree with us. We're going to work actively with them towards self-regulation of this business.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Ottawa Centre is out of order.

Mrs Ross: As a member of the Ontario Real Estate Association, I'm aware of the long-standing interest that that industry has in self-management. Can you please tell me if your ministry supports that movement?

Hon Mr Sterling: The Ontario Real Estate Association has about 45,000 registrations with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations each year, and it has very, very few complaints against this profession. Therefore, there really is not a need for the government to be involved in it to the extent it is at this time.

The real estate industry has been asking for 20 years to be self-regulating. We have again met with this group and we're working very actively towards self-regulation of this very important industry in the province of Ontario. We believe they can do as good a job as us or even better.

EVELYN DODDS

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Can the minister confirm in this House today that in recent days his government has appointed the defeated Progressive Conservative candidate in Fort William, Mrs Evelyn Dodds, as a full-time member of the Social Assistance Review Board, which position pays upwards of \$68,000 a year?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): What I will confirm is this: that the Social Assistance Review Board is in need of many people with great qualifications who will certainly assist the Ministry of Community and Social Services in its mandate to provide services to the most needy.

Mr Conway: In view of the fact that 18 months ago that same Mrs Dodds, in appearing before a standing committee of this Legislature, stated that it was her view that welfare recipients should lose all of their privacy rights—she said that in a committee of this Legislature just 18 months ago—in view of that expressed view from your recently appointed Mrs Dodds to the Social Assistance Review Board, what, if any, assurances can you give this House that the very colourful and often extreme Mrs Dodds will discharge her new responsibilities consistent with the law of the land?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm not prepared at this point in time to comment on what someone has or has not said in the past. What I will indicate is that there are some vacancies currently on the Social Assistance Review Board and this government will endeavour to make sure

that people who do fill those vacancies are competent and have the best interests of this province at heart.

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LAYOFFS

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question today is for the Chair of Management Board. I'd like first to offer congratulations to him on his appointment to this very difficult and challenging portfolio.

Last week, Minister, you announced that you were cutting \$772 million from the expenditures of this place in order to reach your targets and of course to meet your tax cut. We know from discussions we've had and announcements that have been made that this is just the beginning, that these 1,400 jobs originally and then 13,000 to 20,000 more to come will affect communities like Sault Ste Marie and Hamilton and Toronto in very many major and important ways.

Will the Chair of Management Board please inform the House what analysis he instructed officials to undertake on the economic loss to these communities before making these cuts? Does the Chair of Management Board have any idea of the economic loss to these communities, and where does he expect these people to find work?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I appreciate the question. Having been a mayor of a municipality for a number of years and an alderman back before that for a number of years, I understand the concern with regard to communities about jobs and employment within those communities.

I would say to the member, though, that the rationale for the reductions we have been pursuing is simply because when we took office in June we were informed by the Ministry of Finance that the deficit for the province of Ontario would be \$10.6 billion in 1995-96. It was reported to us at \$5.8 billion, member for Sault Ste Marie, by your government; in actual fact it was \$10.6 billion. The people of the province of Ontario have told us that this is not sustainable, and we pursued a number of courses of action to reduce that deficit to \$8.7 billion.

A number of communities will be impacted, there's no question about it, but I say to you that without those reductions, and carrying on with \$10-billion deficits year after year—in five years now we've had \$10-billion deficits—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon David Johnson: —the impact on those communities across Ontario in five or 10 years from now will be much more severe.

Mr Martin: That's all very nice and the rhetoric plays well, but we in this House know and the people across Ontario know that this government is bent on an ideology, on an ideology that was tried in the United States, that was tried in Britain, and it didn't work.

As a matter of fact, even your own leader, when he was in opposition, asked our Premier not to throw anybody out of work unless you're prepared to understand that we need private sector jobs and opportunities for them at the same time. Mr Minister, where are the jobs?

Hon David Johnson: What we know has not worked for government in the province of Ontario is the tax-and-spend cycle that we've been caught in, the spending between 1985 and 1990, the deficits between 1990 and 1995. The deficit, the debt of the province of Ontario, the lack of confidence in the economy of the province, is costing jobs. The red tape, Bill 40, are costing jobs in the province of Ontario.

My answer to the member for Sault Ste Marie is that to create the jobs in Ontario, we need to get the financial house of the province in order. We need to eliminate the deficit, and that's what we intend to do. Secondly, we need to remove the red tape. That's what we intend to do by eliminating Bill 40 and other measures. Once we have accomplished that, in this term of government, then the jobs will return and prosperity will return to Ontario.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): Mr Speaker, let me take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to you on your election as Speaker of this House. I know you will serve this office well. Further, I extend my best wishes to all members on their election last June. I look forward to meeting and working with you all as I serve throughout my term.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I was pleased to hear the minister reaffirm the government's commitment to retain the farm tax rebate program under its current status until a proper review of the provincial tax system is complete. This was a true indication to all of the agricultural community that this government is prepared to deliver its fair share of support to the industry.

However, farmers still face many difficult challenges ahead, so I ask the minister today, given that farmers in all commodities have experienced considerable economic hardship and dislocation over the past decade, can the minister indicate to the farmers of Halton North and all the farmers in Ontario that he will continue to liaise with the farm groups as Agriculture and Food positions itself to take advantage of the future?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Speaker, may I also add my congratulations to you, sir. You have represented Simcoe East very well and I know you will give them reason to be very proud of you in the future.

To my colleague from Halton North, I'm pleased that he put that question forth because we've been sitting here for two weeks and the opposition didn't think agriculture was important enough to ask a question.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I think you would agree with me, being the distinguished individual that you are and having good judgement, that it is improper to impute motives in this House, and I think the suggestion was that the opposition didn't care about the state of agriculture so we weren't asking questions as a result. I know you would agree with me that that's inappropriate.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. You have no point of privilege.

Wrap up your answer, please, Minister.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Mr Speaker, I simply made a statement of fact.

As the members will know, I had the opportunity of travelling this province and listening to farmers, and yes, farmers are very concerned about the state of their industry. However, we are coming to a situation where a good crop is coming off with a good price this year. The minister will not dare take credit for that, but that is a fact.

I also want to tell you that about a month ago I signed the document that is rebating 75% of the farm tax to our farmers in 1995.

Mr Chudleigh: I am, on behalf of the agricultural community in Halton North, indeed pleased to hear the minister's response.

My supplementary deals with the minister's attempt to increase communication with the rural community through the recent series of discussions in cross-province tours that concluded at the end of September. The goals of these table talks were not only to include rural Ontario in the decision-making process, but also to develop a prosperous vision of rural Ontario with agribusiness and set ministry priorities for the future. I applaud the minister's initiatives to increase communication with the rural community.

Can the minister share some of the priorities outlined by farm and agricultural groups as a result of these meetings?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: We listened to about 1,400 people who on very short notice took time to come and attend our table talks and provide us with input, which we are very much listening to. For example, the common threads are: how important the agrifood business is to all of Ontario; the changing global marketplace; and yes, get the government out of their business. Bills like Bill 91 had no business ever being implemented; we are removing Bill 91. We are changing Bill 163, the Planning Act. That is what agriculture wants. They told us, and we're listening and acting.

1430

JENNY LAVOIE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to be addressed to the Minister of Health, but he's off talking to someone. I'll wait until he returns.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Carry on with your question.

Mr Bartolucci: My question regards the recommendations of the coroner's inquest into the death of Jenny Lavoie, and it's addressed to the Minister of Health.

On August 8, 1993, Jenny Lavoie was in a serious motorcycle accident that eventually claimed her life. After waiting 18 months to obtain a coroner's inquest, the family of Jenny Lavoie learned that a series of events led to her untimely death, including a number of confusing transfers, miscommunication between doctors, and procedures bordering on medical malpractice.

To date, no action has been taken with regard to the recommendations of the inquest. On July 20, 1995, I

wrote to the minister's office urging him to act on those 10 recommendations. It has been almost three months and I have had no response. More importantly, the family of Jenny has had no response.

How long do the family of Jenny Lavoie and the people of Sudbury have to wait before your government takes action on the recommendations of the coroner's inquest?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I'm very much aware of the recommendations from the coroner's inquest, and I do apologize to the honourable member for Sudbury. I did write to the district health council last week and very specifically asked that they include implementation, where possible, of those recommendations in the restructuring discussions that are going on in his community. I apologize for not copying you that letter and I'll be sure to do that today.

Mr Bartolucci: That does not answer my question at all. With all due respect, my question is not about processes or political turf wars which are resulting because of the restructuring. I'm astounded at the minister's response.

After five days of hearing, the coroner's inquest clearly pointed to the shortcomings in the hospital system that may have contributed to Jenny's death. The 10 recommendations of the inquest were not made to add fuel to an ongoing turf war, but were made to save lives.

Is the minister now prepared to ask the Lavoie family and the residents of Sudbury to wait even longer to implement the recommendations of the coroner's request? If not, what does he intend to do as the Minister of Health?

Hon Mr Wilson: I made it very clear to all of the parties involved in Sudbury that I'm not interested in any type of turf war, nor am I interested in politics in health care.

My letter was very straightforward. I think it's probably somewhat unprecedented that a Minister of Health would write in such strong terms to a district health council, which is supposed to be an advisory committee to me as minister. I wrote to them very clearly addressing these issues, and I expect and I am certainly hopeful that they will take the coroner's recommendations into consideration.

After all, we have to respect local autonomy. We have to respect a district health council made up of local people; we have to respect your constituents, who at the end of the day will have responsibility to ensure that the improvements to the hospital system are actually implemented at the grass-roots level.

So I will be sure to, by the end of today, make sure you receive a copy of that letter, and we'll work together to make sure the system improves in Sudbury.

PROJECT FIRST STEP

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, I want to ask you a question regarding a successful program in Hamilton called Project First Step. I hope the minister would know that this is a program that helps over 65 single moms every year

through a 10-week session that assists them in getting off of social assistance and back into the workplace or back into school. The minister will know that there's an 80% success rate, and with a budget of only \$140,000 a year, this would seem to be exactly the kind of program the government ought to be supporting rather than eliminating.

Will the minister please tell the House today why you're cutting such a successful program that would appear to do exactly what needs to be done and in fact what you promised to do during the campaign, and that's help people get off social assistance? Will you, Minister, tell us why you're taking this step?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I thank the honourable member for his introduction of this particular program, Project First Step. It is true, it's to assist single mothers to enter or re-enter the workforce. I agree wholeheartedly that it is an excellent program.

I guess I might have spoiled your supplemental question here, but my indication right now, today in the House, is that this project will continue to be funded. We will continue to fund this.

Mr Christopherson: It doesn't spoil my supplementary. What's more important is the program that we believe you were spoiling in Hamilton. If that's correct, then of course it goes against all the information that's already out there. But I don't care about that. What I'd like to do then, Minister, is follow up very directly. Are you saying today that you will continue to fund this program without any time frame, that you will continue to support this program in Hamilton to the same amount that they've been receiving previously so they can continue to help women get back into the workplace? Minister, is that the precise commitment you're making today?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: There's something I can confirm; there's something I can't confirm. First of all, the difficulty we've had with programs in the past, with any social assistance, is there's been no end dates to these. I'm not saying there is an end date to this. However, the commitment is that we will continue to fund this program and it'll be at the same amount as it has been in the past.

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION

Mr Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Last week the minister indicated to the member for Grey-Owen Sound that he would be granting more power to the municipalities through changes to the Planning Act. I would ask the minister today if he would be considering giving further power to the municipalities through a new Municipal Act.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the member for the question. If there's one message that the municipalities have been giving me in the short time we've been in office, it is that they want a new Municipal Act. It's the intention of this government to get off the backs of the municipalities in the province of Ontario, so I can assure you that we will be bringing in a new Municipal Act.

Mr Jordan: I wonder if the minister would tell this House the approximate date that this new act would come into effect.

Hon Mr Leach: The staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing are working on looking at the act at the present time, seeing what has to be amended and revised, and I can tell the honourable member that we will have the act in this House within 12 months.

TAX REDUCTION

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Premier. A cornerstone, as we all know, of your campaign promise was that you were going to commit to a 30% reduction in personal income tax. You've now had a chance to look at the books and to get the full state of the finances and the economy for Ontario. I wonder if the Premier today would indicate to the House whether that 30% cut in personal income tax over the next three years continues to be the government's commitment.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I appreciate the opportunity to respond and I think it's an important thing that we understand it. It's a reflection too of an earlier question that, as the public sector is downsized, as we move to balance the budget—which I think all parties in this Legislature agree needs to be done—we need to grow the private sector. We need more jobs, we need an uptake in investment and in growth in jobs in the private sector. Clearly, the private sector today, more so than any other time in our history, has various choices of where it's going to invest, where it's going to create jobs—other provinces, other states, other countries, other jurisdictions.

Being tax competitive, being regulatory competitive, are key to those. For example, investment firm Wood Gundy says this: "Tax cuts, not just lower interest rates, are now desperately needed to reverse what has been an unprecedented collapse in consumer spending in Canada." A major investment firm—this is what they are saying. "In the absence of purchasing power gains"—these are private sector purchasing power gains—"continued efforts by the Bank of Canada to broaden the expansion in consumer spending are going to prove negligible." So, while lower interest rates are important, while getting the deficit under control is important, clearly what we are seeing is that if we are going to get jobs and growth, we need a rise in consumer confidence. We need people buying houses, buying cars, buying fridges, buying furniture, and they are not going to get that if they feel that it is the goal of government to take every single last nickel out of their pockets, as has been the case for the last 10 years. Therefore, we remain committed to job-creating tax cuts so that consumers in the province of Ontario can begin to lead the recovery in a job creation way.

1440

Mr Phillips: I take it from the answer that the commitment remains.

The second part of it, then, is that you have indicated, Premier, that the finances of the province are far worse than you had thought coming into office, that the economy is weaker than you had thought. You had said during the election campaign that you were going to cut

\$6 billion from the expenditures. Since then, you have indicated that it's going to be far higher. The reason for the question is simple. You're going to balance the budget. You're going to implement your tax cut. By definition, you're going to have to cut substantially more than you had said during the election campaign.

Will you indicate to the House today the size of that? It's not going to be \$6 billion. You, I gather, have said publicly it could be as much as \$9 billion. Can you indicate how big the cut is going to have to be and where you anticipate the additional whatever it is—\$3 billion—in cuts is to come from?

Hon Mr Harris: Clearly we have a problem, and it is more serious than was stated and was out publicly when we put forward our platform, or even when your party put forward the famous balanced budget a year earlier than us, the red book.

It is very difficult to know what growth will be three years from now, four years from now—growth in the North American economy, interest rates, a number of these areas. We have indicated that \$6 billion in reductions are what we believe is necessary to balance our books. I want to say this: We believe that \$6 billion is necessary with or without tax cuts. We believe the tax cuts will create more jobs, more taxpayers, more growth and investment in this province, and they will pay huge dividends, not only for more people working but for the treasury of the province of Ontario.

Will it be in excess of \$6 billion? We don't know that. I said I have no way of knowing two years, three years, four years, five years down the road. It could be \$9 billion if in fact there is a recession, if the North American economy does this. Everybody gives me all the ifs, if all these things happen—if there is an earthquake, if there is calamity, if there is collapse, if these things happen.

What we do know is this: We believe \$6 billion in spending cuts are necessary to balance the budget whether there are tax cuts or not. Secondly, we believe tax cuts are required to give us the jobs that we need and the growth that we need and the prosperity that we need and the change in direction from the disaster of the last decade that everybody is looking for.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The time for oral questions has expired. We'll revert back now to statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS HURRICANE RELIEF

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): As you know, Mr Speaker, the islands of St Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, Barbuda and other islands in the Caribbean were subjected to the natural fury of Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn. It caused unimaginable destruction, devastating the tiny islands and their residents.

Hospitals were destroyed, schools were flattened and the battering wind and rain decimated an already fragile infrastructure. The storm crippled the power utilities, leaving the electrical system in chaos.

At the request of the Right Honourable Dr Denzel Douglas, Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, and with

the assistance of Dr Knolly Hill, an Antiguan living in Toronto, I went down and inspected the damage and provided assistance where it was needed. Special recognition must go to Eli Lilly pharmaceutical, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Med-Chem Laboratories of Scarborough for their quick response in the generous donation of medical supplies to aid the sick and injured.

Those of us who would like to donate or assist in the rebuilding may do so by contacting the consul general for Antigua and Barbuda, Ms Madeline Blackman, in Toronto. It is also possible to contact the High Commission of Eastern Caribbean States through the high commissioner.

The prime ministers of both countries have asked me to appeal for any assistance and support that the province may wish to offer. I will also be approaching the Premier, the Honourable Mike Harris, to use his good offices in soliciting support to assist in the restoration effort.

I appeal to all Ontarians to lend assistance in whatever form possible to aid the unfortunate victims of this horrific tragedy.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Before we go to the next statement, I would like to recognize the acting House leader.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I would simply wish to seek the consent of this House to waive the standing order that five members stand for division at 6 o'clock.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it agreed, unanimous consent? Agreed.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to make a statement today regarding the government's decision to end the early childhood education pilot programs and to make junior kindergarten a local option. We believe that this will seriously harm both young children and eventually the community at large.

All of the research and decades of experience of primary school teachers show that early childhood education is good for young people and has positive repercussions for their educational career.

Quality early childhood education actually saves money in the long run: More children stay in school longer, have improved literacy, numeracy and language skills and have less chance of future unemployment, teenage pregnancy or delinquency if they attend early childhood programs.

We know that parents want these programs. Currently 85% of the four-year-olds and 99% of the five-year-olds in Ontario are enrolled in public education kindergartens; almost all half-day.

The proposed pilots funded by the previous government were a sensible, low-cost approach to find out which programs are most effective. Ending the pilot projects and threatening other early childhood education is a serious mistake by this government, and young people and our whole society will pay the price. I urge the government to reconsider this poor decision.

BARRIE COLTS

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): As the senior member of Simcoe county, I congratulate you on your election as Speaker.

Recently I had the opportunity to drop the first puck to open the inaugural season of the new Barrie Colts hockey team. The Colts are the newest team in the Ontario Hockey League. The Colts and the residents of Barrie eagerly await the completion of the Barrie Molson Centre, a 4,500-seat, state-of-the-art facility that will be the new home to the Colts and many other entertainment events.

The tradition of the Colts has been a winning one. They have won many league and provincial championships. They even won the Memorial Cup, the measure of Canadian junior hockey supremacy, in 1953. The Colts have provided many young men with the opportunity to perfect their hockey skills. It is anticipated that several members of this year's team will be first-round draft picks in the NHL draft.

I would like to wish the management and players of the Barrie Colts much success for the coming season and future seasons. I have no doubt this organization will continue the tradition of success and will become the model for all other Ontario Hockey League franchises. I look forward to celebrating a Memorial Cup victory in the near future, and I encourage all members to come to Barrie and cheer on the Colts.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): The government commitment to a 30% personal income tax cut has left municipalities in somewhat of a quandary. This commitment has had the effect of picking the pockets of municipalities, and as a result they are being forced to find new ways of collecting the shortfall in revenues. The solution is quite simple: They are simply going to raise property and business taxes across this province.

However, there is a problem with this. Businesses, especially small businesses, can't afford this. According to Ted Mallet of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business: "Higher property taxes would be disastrous. They will destroy jobs, income, and create more poverty" and inequities.

The typical business in Ontario is currently paying about \$3,190 in taxes for every \$100,000 of property value. How much more will be added on to this bill if the government follows through on its irresponsible 30% tax cut?

The Premier of this province knew full well when he made this promise in the Common Sense Revolution that he was simply passing the buck to the local municipalities, perfectly willing to let them bear the burden of trying to raise revenues after this government recklessly shafted the municipalities out of their fair share of income tax revenues.

1450

The government will only deliver on its promises to cut tax by 30% in rhetoric. In reality, both businesses and property owners alike will absorb the shortfall, and as a result, a further stagnation of the economy will ensue.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I'd like to direct my statement today to the Premier and the Minister of Labour.

I would like to invite the minister to Kapuskasing and to the Reesor siding, site of the 1963 shooting of three lumber and sawmill workers. At that site, Minister, is a statue; a woodsman and his family have been installed. This statue serves as both a memorial and a reminder of the lumber and sawmill strike a quarter of a century ago, in 1963, in which lives were lost in this violent protest.

This story began and ended on February 11, 1963, when the Spruce Falls Power and Paper Co bush workers, having been involved in a lengthy strike, were protesting the mill's buying of lumber from farmers and labourers in the district. The strikers arrived on the scene with the intention of stopping any loading that might take place on that day. The suppliers were aware of the plan and shots were fired in the direction of the union men, killing three and wounding eight others. The strike ended soon after and the statue was erected three years later.

Kapuskasing will never forget that black day in 1963. Those were the bad old days of labour strife, of violence on the picket lines and severe labour and management confrontations.

Over the years progress has been made in labour relations by bringing in legislation to protect workers and bring about a more harmonious relationship in the workplace. Improvements in the workplace health and safety systems did this. Employee wage protection programs did this. Bill 40, placing a ban on replacement workers during a strike, did this.

Minister, your Bill 7 will take us back to the bad old days of labour strife, which workers in this province hoped we'd never see again and workers in Kapuskasing hoped they would never see again.

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): My statement concerns a celebration that demonstrates the spirit of volunteerism is thriving in the province of Ontario.

The third annual Good Neighbours Week began October 9 to coincide with Thanksgiving and runs to the 15th.

Good Neighbours is a community-based public awareness campaign to make our communities safer, friendlier and more responsive to people in need. It develops and nurtures informal support systems for those who may need help from time to time, especially the frail, vulnerable and isolated.

Launched in 1990, Good Neighbours is a three-way partnership between the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation; corporate sponsors, including the Royal Bank and Consumers' Gas; and community volunteers.

In the speech from the throne on September 27, Premier Mike Harris said Ontarians are a generous people working to make their communities better places to live and he directed me to lead a government initiative to support and promote the spirit of volunteerism in the province.

I am proud Keswick, Uxbridge and Stouffville are among the 54 Ontario communities that have adopted the Good Neighbours campaign. Good Neighbours is an example of existing programs I will be promoting where volunteers make a commitment to the less fortunate and to our communities. Volunteerism demonstrates the kind of traditional community values that Good Neighbours represents in the province of Ontario.

DUTY-FREE SHOP

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I am pleased to rise in the House today to congratulate the University of Windsor on its second week's anniversary of operating the duty-free shop at the Ambassador Bridge, the second week with a liquor licence. The Ambassador Bridge is the longest international bridge in the world and is the only border crossing in Canada that is privately owned and whose property is interwoven neatly with that of the University of Windsor.

Firstly, I congratulate university president Ron Ianni for his innovation and creativity in battling the neverending war of decreasing funding to universities. I congratulate the management of the Ambassador Bridge Co, including former Ontario minister Remo Mancini, who struck a contract that guarantees university student jobs at that duty-free shop and guarantees the university much-needed parking facilities and a handsome revenue regardless of sales during the business year. In fact, it's estimated that annual revenues to Ontario's LCBO for liquor sales alone will be \$3 million to \$4 million.

What's particularly interesting about this public-private partnership is the horrendous amount of red tape and bureaucracy the university had to endure to finally receive approval for its liquor licence.

Yes, the very minister who just the other day in this House expounded the virtues of the government commitment to enhancing small business opportunities went on to stall this licence for three months. Minister Sterling ran political interference with the LCBO, commandeering its board of directors at a provincial cost of \$1 million in lost sales.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Time has expired.

Mrs Pupatello: But, best of all, congratulations to the University of Windsor.

NATIVE HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Mr Speaker, through you I'd like to deliver, through this statement, both orally and a letter to the Minister of Health, Mr Jim Wilson. I'd like to bring him up to date in regard to something that's been going on now for the past number of years regarding the establishment of a native health centre in the community of Timmins.

I think you, Mr Speaker, as well as everybody else in this assembly knows that the native people, the first nations people of this province, when it comes to measuring up the health care services that they have and their general health in regard to the comparison of people who are non-natives, there has been a very big difference over the years. In other words, if you happen to be native living in Ontario, the chances of your health being as

good as or equal to those people who are non-native is somewhat lesser.

The reasons for that are many, but I think one of them we understand quite well as being one of culture. When it comes to accessing health care services for the first nations people in this province, often there is a difficulty in doing so because of cultural differences between our white community and non-white community. For that reason, health centres were being established, first of all, under the Liberal government of Mr Peterson, and under the Rae government, with the NDP government, to recognize that we needed to find ways to be able to deliver health care services directly to those people who are most in need through a means appropriate to them.

We are now into a situation in the community of Timmins where the Misiway Eniniwuk Community Health Centre is now on hold because the government is not willing to free up the funds that they need in order to carry on the next part of their project, which is finding them their permanent location.

I would like to deliver the Minister of Health a plea for help so that—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member's time has expired.

Mr Bisson: —he takes the opportunity to meet with the people from Timmins in order to go through—

The Speaker: Next statement.

Mr Bisson: —and to be able to commit to what this government—

The Speaker: Come on. We've got to make these statements a little shorter.

VETERANS

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): I rise in the House today on behalf of my constituents from Etobicoke-Rexdale to pay tribute to the 1,086,343 Canadian men and women who served in the Second World War. It has been 50 years since the end of that war.

Canada's contribution to the Second World War has a great historical significance to the way our country is perceived by the nations of the world. Our declaration of war against the Third Reich in September 1939 was initiated in our own Parliament. This marked substantially the first sign of our nation's independence from Britain in the area of foreign affairs.

The Royal Canadian Air Force was responsible for the air combat training of the Allied pilots.

Volunteer enlistment in Canada was the highest of all the Allied nations, with men and women as young as 17 answering Canada's call to arms to preserve the peace.

As the war intensified, our forces spearheaded several Allied assaults with the same pride and courage that has now become traditional in the Canadian Armed Forces.

This year commemorates the 50th anniversary of Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan days. Let us all pay our respects to the 1.1 million Canadians who fought to preserve our nation's freedom, and to the 42,042 who paid the supreme sacrifice and never made it home.

On behalf of my constituents, I would like to say

thanks to all the veterans, their families and fallen comrades. Thank you and God bless.

1500

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris Common Sense Revolution campaign document said 'not a penny' of health care funding will be touched;

"Whereas the Common Sense Revolution said, 'We will not cut health care spending, it is far too important';

"Whereas the Common Sense Revolution said, 'There will be no new user fees';

"Whereas the first financial activity of the Harris government has been to actually cut \$130 million from the health budget;

"Whereas the Harris government has announced they are actively considering new user fees;

"We, the undersigned, demand a public apology from the Harris government for breaking their election promise on health care and putting our treasured health care system at risk by cutting health spending by \$130 million."

I've signed my name to this petition and I support it.

QUEEN STREET MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): This petition grew out of the demonstration today at the Minister of Health's office at 12 noon. This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the PC government is going to open a 20bed forensic facility for the criminally insane at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre; and

"Whereas the nearby community is already home to the highest number of ex-psychiatric patients and social service organizations in hundreds of licensed and unlicensed rooming-houses, group homes and crisis care facilities in all of Canada; and

"Whereas there are existing facilities that could be expanded to assess and treat the criminally insane; and

"Whereas no one was consulted—not the local residents, not the business community, not leaders of community organizations, not education and child care providers and not even"—get this—"the local members of provincial Parliament for Parkdale and Fort York;

"We, the undersigned residents and business owners of our community, urge the PC government of Ontario and the Minister of Health to immediately stop all plans to accommodate the criminally insane in an expanded Queen Street Mental Health Centre until a public consultation process is completed."

I will sign my name to this document.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CITY OF NEPEAN ACT, 1995

Mr Baird moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr13, An Act respecting the City of Nepean.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

CITY OF NEPEAN ACT, 1995

Mr Baird moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr14, An Act respecting the City of Nepean.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

WATERLOO-GUELPH REGIONAL AIRPORT ACT, 1995

Mr Leadston moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr38, An Act respecting the Waterloo-Guelph Regional Airport.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

WATERLOO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT, 1995

Mr Leadston moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr11, An Act respecting the Waterloo County Board of Education.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

CITY OF BRAMPTON ACT, 1995

Mr Clement moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr9, An Act respecting the City of Brampton.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): First of all, I'll take the opportunity to thank the constituents of my riding for the June 8 election results and for the confidence and the trust that they have put in me to represent them in the provincial Legislature. I certainly will do that to the best of my ability in the next four to five years as a member of the opposition representing the good people of Hamilton East.

I want to pay tribute to the former member, first of all, Bob Mackenzie, who represented the area with dignity and distinction for over 20 years, who certainly was a friend of working people in my riding and certainly was a friend of Hamiltonians. I want to wish Mr Mackenzie the best in his retirement, good health. Certainly his contribution to the House and to the city of Hamilton and to the province I'm sure was well appreciated; certainly a class act and a great gentleman.

I look at the throne speech and I look at the impact it has on my own community. I guess what is really interesting is not what it contains, but what is missing, what it lacks. We have a situation in the community where we've had a cancellation of a major project by the previous government, cancellation of the Red Hill Creek Expressway, the north-south portion that the NDP government stopped after the work already had commenced on it.

At that point, Mike Harris, as leader of the third party

in the House, made a commitment that was repeated numerous times throughout the election campaign, that there will be full funding restored for the Red Hill Creek Expressway. Not only has the full funding not been restored for the north-south portion, but what has happened is, as a result of this government's cuts and Ernie Eves's economic statement, \$6.5 million was removed from the funding for 1995 for the east-west portion of the expressway.

This is clearly a betrayal of that promise, this is clearly a betrayal of the commitment that the Premier has made to the good people of Hamilton, and I believe it's a betrayal of the Conservative members who have been elected in the Hamilton area, elected with the full expectation that the full funding will not only be restored but at least maintained.

This has not happened. There is no clear commitment that this funding will be reinstated in 1996. What this will cause is a delay, possibly in the project, and a delay in the north-south portion of an expressway that is very much needed for the city of Hamilton, an expressway that we urge this government to move on. Unfortunately, the throne speech chose not to make any reference to this.

We have now been made aware, as of Friday of last week, that funding for the courthouse project has been delayed in Hamilton-Wentworth. There were the renovations for the old post office to become a combined courthouse in the city of Hamilton. The first phase had been completed to a tune of \$16 million. The second phase was commenced to start.

This government cut \$5.5 million out of that courthouse. It has now jeopardized the future of the project and it has jeopardized phase 2. Along with that are also a number of delays which have occurred in the transfer of regional offices and would have occurred in the administration of regional government as a result of this courthouse being built—another betrayal, another commitment that had been made that has been broken.

There was no protection to hospitals and health care systems as committed to during the election. If we look at the throne speech, we hear words such as "reinvestment," which is the new word that this government has come up with to talk about cuts. They're no longer cuts, they're now called reinvestments. Hospitals have been hit by that.

In Hamilton, the UN school at McMaster University: Again, I don't recall hearing or seeing any documents during the provincial campaign that said this government would cut its portion of funding, based on a joint federal-provincial share, for the UN school that was to be at McMaster University—another betrayal, another broken promise.

1510

Protection of seniors and the disabled: Once again, the throne speech stated there would be this protection of seniors and the disabled. As we see in the House today, as we have seen over the last two weeks in this province, seniors and the disabled have been abandoned by this government. Seniors and the disabled had their benefits cut. Now there's a move to basically move 115,000

individuals who are now receiving a disability pension on to the welfare rolls—another clear betrayal.

This talks to the meanness of the cuts, to the meanness of the Ontario that we're seeing today. We all understand the need for fiscal restraint, we all understand that the deficit has to be brought under control. But what is driving this government's agenda is this unprecedented drive not only to reduce the deficit, not only to balance the budget, but to ensure that we provide this 30% tax cut. The 30% tax cut will benefit the rich in this province, will primarily benefit people who make \$80,000, \$100,000, \$150,000. It is this drive that is creating the type of meanness and the cuts that are in front of us today.

This government has allowed the most vulnerable people in this province to be further victimized. This government doesn't understand how difficult it is for people in this province to work, how difficult it is to find employment, how difficult it is for a single mom with a couple of kids to look after the kids and try to find employment and day care and housing. It does not understand the difficulties that people who are truly in need in Ontario face every single day.

It is this level of meanness and this level of deep, deep cuts without any real understanding of how it impacts real people across Ontario that is going to set chaos for years to come, because you cannot simply throw millions of people into the underclass as you're doing and expect that there will not be a reaction across Ontario and expect that we will not pay the price in years to come. We will pay the price for these cuts. We will pay the price for these benefit reductions. We will pay the price for the fact that you're driving people who are in difficult situations further into the ground and into further economic difficulty and basically ensuring, by your cuts, that millions of children across Ontario are to be stuck in a cycle of welfare dependency because you're taking away from them today, as a result of your massive and brutal cuts, the opportunities they should have.

This has been the largest, most massive attack on the needy in the history of Ontario. My friends across the floor may laugh, because they don't understand what it is like for people to be in pain in Ontario. My riding of Hamilton East has hundreds of steelworkers who have lost their jobs, whose UI is exhausted, who have lost their benefits and are now forced on to welfare rolls. These people are not criminals. They don't need snitch lines set up against them. These people don't need their benefits cut. They are not lazy people who don't want to work; they're hardworking people who, as result of economic conditions, are forced on to the welfare rolls. I'm sure that is reflected in communities right across this province.

I dare any of you to tell the laid-off steelworker in my riding that he or she is lazy and doesn't want to work and you're punishing them by reducing their benefits and taking away opportunities for employment. That is the real face of Ontario today. That is the face of welfare in Ontario today. It is not the stereotypical 18-year-old kid sitting at home drinking beer and watching TV all day, as the Tories like to portray—a myth from one end of the province to the other.

Before we go off on another round of brutal, massive cuts as have occurred, I ask each member of the government to spend a few days among real people who have been affected by the cuts, to spend a few days among the people who are hurting and talk to them and look at their faces and look at their children's faces. Then look at yourself in the mirror and say: "Are we doing the right thing with these cuts? How can we continue to inflict the type of punishment we are on people today?"

The hurting has got to stop, and the leadership for this has to come from the government, has to come from the Premier. Stop beating up on people who need help. Reach out, give them a hand, not a kick in the head.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): The issue I want to raise today in response to the throne speech is that of tax cuts. There's been a lot of comment over the last 18 months and during the campaign that to give a tax break was going to create jobs. I have not yet seen where the 725,000 jobs are going to come from over the next three or four years. If somebody with an income of \$30,000 gets a \$12 break in their taxes, how many jobs are going to be created by that small amount of money in a tax break? It will probably cost them more in user fees and property taxes and increases of that kind than what they will gain in savings in the long run.

"Your government plans to encourage private sector creation by honouring its pledge to cut provincial tax rates starting with its first budget." All we've heard so far is cutbacks and layoffs and people being thrown out of work, examples of cutbacks that I've talked about in my statements and in a question to the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development and Mines the other day: How are you going to protect the front-line service by cutting in the two ministries a total of \$57 million and still give the service needed? Since 1993, I believe a lot of these ministries were cut down to the bare minimum. There is very little cutting that can be done without laying off hundreds or thousands of people.

One of the things I fear is that the good folks out there who are looking for a tax break are just dreaming. Their tax breaks will be eaten up, as I said before, by whatever government is doing in cuts to municipalities. All the municipalities have received letters saying, "By the way, the money you were expecting"—whether it's a letter to the town of Hearst, whether it's a letter to the town of Cochrane. Where they were expecting \$130,000, now they're only going to receive half of that, \$65,000. In Cochrane the examples are very similar: Where they were going to get \$50,000, now they're only going to receive about \$6,700.

What has happened is that the federal government passed on a lot of reduction in transfers to the province, said they were going to do block funding. Now, in turn, we see the Mike Harris government in Ontario passing it on to the municipalities in a 20% cut. They will have to raise this money somewhere or lay off people.

During the campaign, we heard both the Conservative and the Liberal parties campaigning on reductions and tax breaks. Although the Conservative campaign was more extreme than the Liberals', their policies were basically identical: welfare, social assistance, and "We'll give a 5%

tax break," although the Conservatives upped it one step further and said, "We'll give a 30% tax break."

From what I understand so far, if you're talking about cutting back \$6 billion to \$9 billion, and then the transfers from the federal government that are coming is another \$3.4 billion, you're talking about large numbers; and in addition to that, to give a 30% tax break and create 725,000 new jobs from the saving you're going to achieve by firing half of the government employees, or at least a quarter—we've heard different figures: 13,000 in the election campaign, and we heard another 14,500 last Friday, and we hear in different briefings that have been taking place that this number could go a lot higher. The employees working in the liquor stores are very nervous. A lot of people out there are very much concerned about what their future is with this government, and they know it's going to be there for a number of years. 1520

Last week, I talked about the sadness and the fear of eliminating a snowplow and a sanding machine for some of the main highways in northern Ontario. They say, "After the snowstorms are finished we'll clean the main highway and then we'll get around to the secondary highways." That's not what people have been expecting and that's not what people deserve.

Take Smooth Rock Falls, for example. People depend for their livelihood on the fact that the highways will be open and will be maintained, whether it's in summer or winter. They don't expect that the roads will not be maintained for three or four days or a week while they're cleaning up Highway 11 after storms have gone through. This is the message that has gone out, and it's creating a lot of fear and anger throughout northern Ontario.

There is not that much support for what the government is doing. Even if I called all the Conservative supporters from Cochrane North and Cochrane South, and I could probably even go into my good friend Pouliot's riding, we'd have a hard time filling up a medium-sized room. There is no support there for the cuts and the terror being implemented and put on the people of Ontario, especially northern Ontario.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): They get some support.

Mr Len Wood: Yes, but in some of the cases it was a matter of getting their deposit back. The support wasn't quite high enough to be able to win in any of the ridings in northern Ontario, with the exception of the Premier's riding of Nipissing.

As I said, from what I can gather, the cuts and announcements being put out were not laid out in any detail in the throne speech. I don't believe we have heard the full plan by the present Conservative government of what is going to happen to the people of Ontario over the next six months or a year. If you listen, we're getting a little bit here—on July 21 we got one announcement, that \$1.9 billion, and then we got another \$500 million last week. All of the cabinet ministers were so proud to say, "You only asked us for \$500 million plus \$187 million in capital, but we came up with a total of \$771 million." I don't think it's something to be proud of.

When I look at the native friendship centres in Cochrane and Moosonee, they've officially received word of the possible cancellation of the native community development worker program, and the Little Beavers program is being cut. What are all these people to do? Both the programs are essential to the native communities. If the youth of the native communities don't have a program to lean on—well, if you cut 40% out of a program, you might just as well say, "The programs are gone and we'll let these people fend for themselves."

On the tax cut that we hear is going to create jobs, the people in my riding and the people I've talked to throughout the province of Ontario are saying: "It's a dream. Don't expect tax breaks. This is just something they've thrown out there. You're not going to get it. If you get it, it's not going to create jobs."

I've talked to people and I've asked, "In the eventuality that you do get a 30% cut in your taxes, what are you going to do with it?" They said: "I'm going to put it into my retirement, or I'm going to take a trip to Florida. I am not going to go out and hire new employees." I don't know where the Common Sense Revolution book that was put together came up with these figures on job creation. I haven't heard of any people who are going to go out and hire.

If you look at the cuts to child care and social assistance and some of the people on welfare who are disabled, they had a very hard time to feed themselves as it was, and now you end up with a more than 20% cut to them. It puts a burden on the grandparents and the greatgrandparents and the neighbours who are going to have to fend for these people.

I'm a father, a proud father, and I'm also a grand-father, and I don't like to see the hardship brought on these children which the Conservative government is so proud of. I mean, every time we talk about the children being vulnerable and being hurt, there are always smiles on the other side. I don't know why, because I don't take any pleasure out of seeing the disabled, the women and the children hurt in this community. We should all be working together to make sure people have a proper roof over their heads, have the proper medical care. Imagine announcing last week that they're cutting off oxygen going into the homes. I mean, you cut off a person's oxygen, they die. Why would the Conservative Party want to cut a program of this kind?

I know thousands of booklets were put out that some call the Common Sense Revolution. I call it completely silly. It doesn't make any common sense. There's no common sense to this at all. It's completely silly what they have brought out.

The throne speech had one paragraph saying they're going to do things differently in northern Ontario, and from what I can gather in talking to the ministries, they don't care about northern Ontario. They're saying: "We only have one member from northern Ontario in the Conservative caucus, and why should we worry about northern Ontario? We'll just let them fend for themselves."

We have a fair-sized caucus from northern Ontario, which I'm proud to be in, and we have an obligation to

stand up and get our message across that it's not right to see people go through the pain and suffering they are going through as a result of the Conservative government that is elected now. They made promises they're not going to be able to keep, and if they do keep them they are not going to create the 725,000 jobs they were saying it would. They're not going to be able to protect the vulnerable children, the disabled, the women and other groups out there that need protection.

Bill 7: That's turning the clocks back probably 50 or 55 years, going back to the confrontation and the challenge and the disaster that used to happen. If I'm on the picket line on strike and there are a few hundred people being hired and given a bonus to come in to try to break that strike, paid more than I was before I went on strike, you're encouraging violence on the picket line. As I said in my member's statement, 25 years ago we saw people go at it with guns, and we saw other situations in the Yukon. We saw situations in Niagara and St Catharines, and I can think of other places around the province where legislation like Bill 7 will do nothing but create violence. There's a danger of permanently injuring people in confrontation, and people have been killed on the picket line.

I was very disappointed in the throne speech and I don't believe anything in there is going to make it good for the ordinary working people in Ontario. Sure, there's a promise, the carrot held out at the end of the stick, saying, "If we can find \$8 billion, \$10 billion or \$12 billion from the poor people, well, we'll give you back \$4 billion or \$5 billion in the form of a 30% tax cut." But in order to do that, the money is being taken away from the poor, the disabled, the vulnerable people in society, and they're hurting.

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It sounds to me like they're going to continue in this trend of just announcing a few more cuts here and a few more cuts there—"In November we'll make a few more announcements; next spring we'll make a few more announcements"—and in turn they're taking a lot of things away from people that they have expected over the last 50, 55 years. I don't like to see the clocks being turned back 25, 40 or 50 years, and that's what is happening.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your patience in presenting my views today.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): It's my pleasure to stand in this assembly today and participate in the throne speech debate of the 36th Parliament. I'm proud and honoured that the residents of Etobicoke-Rexdale have chosen me to represent their views and concerns over the next few years. After working so hard before and during the election to win the voters' trust, I, along with my colleagues on this side of the House, intend to work hard to preserve that trust.

Etobicoke-Rexdale is a growing community focused on meeting the challenges of the next century. My riding consists of all of Etobicoke, north of Highway 401. I am proud to have served Etobicoke as a city councillor for two terms.

I have seen the irresponsible policies of the previous NDP government inflict havoc on my community. As a fiscal conservative, I have ensured that council would not raise taxes when this country was going through the worst recession in years. This, combined with the honesty and the simplicity of the Common Sense Revolution, prompted me to pick up the CSR banner. By electing Team Harris candidates in all four Etobicoke ridings and sweeping the city blue, Etobicoke today looks to our team to return pride and prosperity to Ontario.

Etobicoke-Rexdale is rich in its multitude of traditions. The 80,000 people in my riding are family-oriented and community-involved. My riding cares about what happens at Queen's Park, and I will ensure that Queen's Park cares about Etobicoke-Rexdale.

Etobicoke-Rexdale is home to Humber College and Etobicoke General Hospital. Humber College, with over 30,000 students, is ranked as one of the top community colleges in Ontario, featuring dynamic new programs in the areas of flight and aviation, health sciences and technology. Humber College has also initiated a job training centre for the plastics industry that is now self-sufficient. The centre has a partnership with industry and the federal and provincial governments.

Etobicoke General is a full-service hospital delivering quality and professional health care. By understanding the ongoing pressures and realities of health care in the 1990s and meeting these challenges, our hospital sets the standard.

Etobicoke-Rexdale is also home to the Woodbine Racetrack, which will host the Breeder's Cup in 1996.

A leader, Etobicoke is dedicated to technology and economic development. The city of Etobicoke has created a technology development task force that is looking into ways in which the city can enhance economic activity through the use of the Internet and other forms of telecommunications. In the next century, more job creation in the private sector will come from the computer and software industries than any other industry.

At this time, I would like to say how honoured I am to be part of this government and in the company of such dedicated and hardworking colleagues.

I would like to identify the concerns the Etobicoke-Rexdale constituents have, and the satisfaction they have, knowing a Team Harris Conservative government is in power at Queen's Park. My constituents are tired of government overspending, tired of 65 separate tax increases from the previous two governments, tired of criminals receiving more rights than victims, and tired of government pulling them back when they spend years trying to get ahead. Having already risen in this House to defend victims' rights, I would like to reaffirm that we must and we will make a real difference for victims. My constituents have repeatedly asked for the provincial government to put an end to welfare fraud. Our government has introduced a 1-800 number for honest citizens to report fraud anonymously. This measure will save \$15 million in the coming year and an estimated \$25 million annually thereafter.

My constituents in Etobicoke-Rexdale have asked this

government to govern by example, and we began by instituting reductions in our own backyard. We have cancelled the Premier's advisory council, saving \$6 million annually, and decreased the cabinet to 18 members from the previous 25. That's unlike Mr Rae, who told Ontario he was decreasing the cabinet when in truth he increased it.

My constituents have asked our government to cut their taxes. Our government will shortly cut taxes in Ontario by 15%, which is the first phase of our government's promised 30% tax cuts. The citizens of Ontario will spend more money on government services than on any other purchase. Team Harris believes they should be spending less and getting more.

My constituents asked Team Harris to close the level 4 virus lab in Etobicoke. Two previous governments did nothing to resolve this issue. The federal government is opening one in Winnipeg; we don't need another one. The Harris government acted swiftly to address the concerns of the very residents who were being asked to live with this lab in their community. The lab is now closed. Our government cares about the health and wellbeing of families in Etobicoke, which is why we acted within the first 60 days. I made a commitment to fight this issue and our government has delivered on my promise.

My constituents are generous individuals who believe firmly in volunteerism. I have volunteers working at my community action office in Etobicoke and at Queen's Park who set aside time to assist their fellow constituents. Our government, unlike the previous NDP government, will encourage volunteerism province-wide through an initiative to support and nurture the spirit of volunteerism in Ontario.

With the leadership of Team Harris, combined with the effort and support of the private sector and volunteers, a nutrition program will be established in Ontario schools to enhance the energy level and academic proficiency of children. The people of Etobicoke-Rexdale are hardworking and they have demanded that we stop giving offenders a free ride. Recently, our government announced a pilot roadwork project for inmates. Inmates in the temporary absence program will beautify a Highway 401 stretch by tree planting, grass cutting and removing of garbage.

The residents of Etobicoke-Rexdale and I support the throne speech and the government as it moves to implement it. In response to the throne speech, I had hoped to hear innovative proposals from the members opposite, rather than carping whines and a lecture on a sink of dayold, dirty, smelly dishwater.

The previous NDP government pursued an agenda detrimental to the future of all Ontarians. Team Harris will ensure that Ontario gets back on track by paying our bills. Reducing the deficit will ensure a brighter, more prosperous future for our children. Team Harris will encourage job creation by fulfilling its campaign promise to cut taxes and regulations on the small businesses that create most of the new jobs in Ontario.

The members opposite have stood in this House and asked, "Where are the jobs?" Well, this is quite the

comment coming from the opposition and third party members who have increased taxes and regulations on business continually, the two prime examples of barriers to job creation. Our government will reduce those barriers.

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One of the goals we must still achieve is bureaucratic reform. We are stuck in an old method of government services that is both costly and ineffective. Businesses live or die by the level of customer service. Imagine trying to get that into this concept of government. Government must rise to this call. Our government will develop innovative and affordable methods of making the government more efficient. If the solution calls for alternative and more affordable ways to provide services, then it is incumbent on this government to examine these methods in complete detail.

Government has been spending on credit for far too long. If someone spends too much on their credit card, what does the bank do? It confiscates that person's credit card, and this damages their credit. The other two parties don't seem to understand that basic concept. They'd rather follow the easier path: spend too much, let the well run dry, tax the people and spend their money. Our party is chopping the government credit card right in half and we'll live within our means like the typical Ontario household of today has to.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessors Ed Philip and Len Braithwaite for their years of service to the riding.

In conclusion, I am proud to be a believer and practitioner in the Common Sense Revolution and a member of a government with a new vision for this province. Here is a place where businesses, jobs and investment will grow to record heights, where our health care and education systems will be second to none. I want to tell my constituents, here is a real place to build a home again. Let me reiterate I will work hard for my constituents to ensure their confidence in me is well served.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I would like to extend my personal sympathies to the Eves family today on this tragic happening to their son.

I would also like to congratulate all of the members who have been elected and all of the returning members who have been elected as well to the Legislature, to you, Madam Speaker, to the other deputy Speakers, to the Speaker and anyone else who has received any elevated positions.

It was in 1987 to 1990 that I was a member of this House and a member of the government, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve again. I want to thank the people of Ottawa Centre for their confidence in me.

I would like to share a word about my riding. It is an urban riding. It is distinguished by Parliament Hill and, yes, the Prime Minister is a worker in my riding. It is the home of many organizations and many business communities. It includes the experimental farm, which has hundreds of acres in an urban riding, which is quite unusual. The Rideau Canal borders the east and the Ottawa River borders the north.

It is a place where new Canadians who come to Ottawa tend to live. It has tremendous cultural diversity in terms of the Italian community, which is well established, the Chinese community and Lebanese community; more recently, the Vietnamese community, Cambodian, Latin American and Somali. It is also where 18% of the population in my riding are gays and lesbians, and with it many fine organizations fighting for human rights. I'm as proud to represent them as I am any other number of people in my riding. It is a multicultural and bilingual community.

Je suis très fier d'être ici en tant que député d'Ottawa-Centre. La circonscription d'Ottawa-Centre se compose de gens qui viennent de toutes les parties du monde. Ottawa-Centre doit relever bon nombre de défis. L'un des plus importants a trait à la qualité de vie du centre-ville et aux relations entre les résidents et les marchands. Cela est important pour la ville d'Ottawa et pour la région d'Ottawa-Carleton.

The primary concerns of people in my riding are really similar to many communities throughout the province of Ontario: employment, health care, education and of course concerns about the future.

I have one special issue that I would like to point out—there are many—but in downtown Ottawa revitalization of the downtown core is vitally important. We have lost population over the last several years. The city must maintain the balance between the commercial and the residential community. This loss of population must stop. The city, the region, the province and the federal government all have an important role to play, and I will do all I can to strengthen the downtown core, which is really so vital not only to the city but to the region.

I was delighted to be asked to serve as the Liberal Party's Education and Training critic. I was disappointed to hear from the Minister of Education and Training recently that there were few priorities from the minister. I shall ask him again that question.

Regardless of the outcome of all of the studies that are now under way, it seems to me that the most important results have to be the quality of learning for our children and our young people in our schools, the quality of resources to teachers in the classroom, the learning tools, the pupil-teacher ratio, the programs inside and outside of the classroom, not just extracurricular activities but the whole learning experience that takes place while our young people are in school.

The Royal Commission on Learning did a wonderful piece of work, and it should be applauded. The government would do well to utilize the wisdom that is in that report.

As the member on the government side for Etobicoke West said the other day in response to another speaker in the House: "It has only been a little over three months. Give us a chance." He's right: It's been about four months. But let's look at what has happened.

The throne speech, it seems to me, was simply a retype on to bond paper of the Common Sense Revolution with a 1-800 number on it. There wasn't anything new in that document. The government has taken some action on

what it promised, I grant that, and it's also taken some action on what it did not promise.

As the Liberal Party, we agree with the government goal of balancing the budget, but not on the backs of the poor. The Liberal Party had proposed a 5% tax deduction for people in a variety of ways. We could not see going any further on that 5% and balancing the budget at the same time. It was a workable budget, it was viable and it was undisputed by any newspaper that I was aware of.

What do we have now? There are four areas of concern that I would like to identify that concern me about this government: the heavy-handedness of government; the impact on the most vulnerable; this government is not interested in listening; and the 30% income-tax cut will not be a true saving for taxpayers.

The heavy-handedness of government: The broad sweep of government cuts reminds me of the approach of the large fishing trawlers with their heavy drag nets trawling with their nets for everything that is found in their path, from the ocean floor up to the top of the waters. They keep the big fish and they discard everything else. This government's heavy-handedness is discarding people caught up in the general sweep of cuts. Not only have individuals been hurt, but hundreds of community and voluntary organizations have been cut back, and in many cases their program base will be cut to the point where their doors will close and jobs will be lost. Our community will be weaker because of it.

The impact on the most vulnerable: The Harris government has now developed a new endangered species list, and I'd like to read it. It's not a complete list; this list will grow. But thousands of children in day care and optional junior kindergarten, seniors on social assistance and the drug plan, battered and abused women in need of sheltering, destitute teenage mothers, prisoners with jobs in halfway houses, persons with disabilities in need of transportation to work, many artists, multicultural groups, museums and even TVOntario are on the endangered species list, and it will be added to as time goes on.

Isn't it ironic that this government is preparing a bill of human rights for victims when they are creating so many victims themselves?

This PC government is not interested in listening to all the people. This will be a government by 1-800 numbers: the welfare snitch line; the throne speech itself—imagine asking the Lieutenant Governor in the middle of a throne speech to read out an 800 number; the Sweeney report on school board amalgamations; the district health council consultations.

I know the government members opposite me will be pleased with the popularity of this government in the recent polls. I will say to the members on the government side, don't get too comfortable with that. The last two governments that had sizeable majorities in the first six months in 1987 and 1990 had rising popularity, and look what happened to them. Listen to the people; it's required day in and day out. The people of Ontario elected a government to administer power, not to act as if it had the power of attorney.

The now famous 30% income tax cut, in my opinion, will not be a true saving. It may be a false tax rebate. First, it will be approximately 12% of income tax, because it's the rate of income tax cut. Just wait until many people discover this fact.

Secondly, speaker after speaker has pointed out the impact on the poor, true, but not the impact on the middle-income earner. I personally will be putting up a chart in my office of a typical family income, the tax rebate, and then I'm going to put underneath it the list of all the new service costs, the user fees, the expenses and the charges that will have to be paid to cover these apparent savings, such as increased local taxes, garbage taxes, college and university fees, day care fees, medical procedures, drugs etc. These are but a small example. There will be more, I'm sure, that we will add to this list.

If it turns out that the income tax cut is offset or even superseded by new user fees, this will be one of the greatest political shell games ever proposed to people during an election time. We shall see.

In conclusion, I want to talk personally to my colleagues on the government side. In pursuit of your economic agenda, remember that there are children, the elderly, the sick, those with disabilities and those who are down on their luck.

In the words of Bernard Shaw, "The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: That's the essence of inhumanity."

It seems to me that the measure of good government will not be on the basis of its tough decisions only, but it will be on its sensitivity for those people most in need of understanding, caring and compassion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): The member for Dovercourt.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased, first of all, to be able to say "Madam Speaker" in addressing the Chair and to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the other members of the presiding team in your positions. I know that we have this year the beginning of an interesting process of sharing the Deputy Speaker's chair on a rotating basis and I think that's a very useful way. It is in fact one of the things that I think we can agree on with the members opposite, on how to improve things in this Legislature.

I want to certainly put on the record why I, together with my colleagues on this side, will not be supporting the throne speech, but let me first of all say that I am thankful to be back in this Legislature. I obviously would have preferred to have been sitting on the other side of the room, but I am none the less grateful to the people of Dovercourt who have chosen to send me back to Queen's Park a second time. I will continue to do what I can to earn, on a continuous basis, their trust and their respect and represent their wishes as clearly and as passionately as I can.

I can say, without hesitation and without shyness at all, that certainly in the riding of Dovercourt—which is a riding in the west end of Toronto which has been home over the years to people from all over the world, people who have come and made and continue to make the city

of Toronto, the west end of Toronto and the Dovercourt riding their home—it has seen fluctuations and changes in the demographics in terms of people from various ethnic groups moving through, but has continued to have large, as it does today, numbers of Italian Canadians, Portuguese Canadians, people from various other ethnocultural groups, various races, and it is a community that I am proud to also call home and to be someone who has lived in the area for many years and continue to represent that area for many years.

I am, therefore, very pleased to be here on behalf of the people of Dovercourt, and to say particularly that at least in the riding of Dovercourt, as I know in many other ridings—certainly not a majority of ridings but in many other ridings—the Common Sense Revolution did not make a lot of sense to many people. That is shown by the results of the election, at least in that riding, as I was able to return to Queen's Park with a sizeable proportion of the vote.

I say that not in a boastful way, but simply as a matter of fact, because I think that one of the things that I know many speakers—and I've had a chance to listen to many of the comments by a number of people on all sides of the House in speaking to the throne speech—but one of the things that I know that many of us on this side of the House have tried to convey to the members of the government is that while they certainly can and should take comfort in the fact that they are the government, and rejoice in that fact, they ought to also take things with some element of stride.

That is, they ought not to make the mistake, which I believe they are making, that in being elected as the government of Ontario, the people of this province embraced, as they clearly do as members of the government, every single line in the Common Sense Revolution, because the pure reality is, the people did not embrace every basic element that's in the Common Sense Revolution. That is a reality which I think people will forget, and this government will forget, quite frankly at their own peril.

I think that we have seen, and I know that when my leader spoke the other day he spoke about this in a far more passionate way than I ever could or indeed many others ever could, in pointing out how much the members of this government seem to cling to this document as almost their credo—as their bible, I think it was referred to. That, again, is certainly to be expected to some extent because there were some key elements in the Common Sense Revolution that I and many of the constituents in my riding disagreed with but a majority of the people across the province did in fact support.

But I think they will realize with the passage of time, as we realized and as I think the government before us realized, that politics have changed in this province and sometimes governments are elected because of what they stand for, and other times they get elected because of many other reasons, including because people are unhappy about certain things that happened in terms of the previous government, and including that they believe for that moment that that is the party that represents their feelings and their views.

I think it is incumbent upon all of us on this side of the House to continue to remind members of the government of that essential point, because—and I have no doubt, in saying that, in also realizing that while some people will quietly pick up on that and will quietly perhaps listen to that message, the government as a whole will not, at least for some time; that they are so bent on proceeding with implementing the basic elements of their Common Sense Revolution that there is no reason that will persuade them, there is no pointing out of the impact of what they are doing that will persuade them otherwise.

They will continue on this road, quite frankly, at least it seems to me, until there is a realization among the public, perhaps as reflected even in the opinion polls, that what this government is doing and the course it has chosen is in fact not healthy for the economy and for the social fabric of this province but in fact is going to cause damage, severe damage, both on the economic front and certainly in terms of dismantling the social fabric that we've built in this province, not just during the time that we in the NDP were the government or even during the time that the Liberals were the government but indeed over decades, including times during which the Conservatives were in power.

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What we have in front of us today is not a Conservative government like Conservative governments that we've seen in the past. What we have is a reform-minded government that is bent on simply getting out of governing. I don't have any other way of putting it except that I see what this government is doing and one of its key objectives, as they see it, is to get out of the job of governing.

Now, they will of course talk about it in terms of simplifying government, of making things easier for people to invest, and I think that we could even on this side of the House agree to some extent with some of the things they are doing. I found it interesting, for example, that some of the approaches they are taking are certainly ones that we, as you know, Madam Speaker, as a member of our previous government, in fact began. In fact I think it was you.

I'm thinking now of some of the initiatives the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, with a lot of fanfare, stood up and announced the other day. It would have been nice to have heard in that announcement a reference even to the previous government, if not the previous minister, who began in fact, under the Clearing the Path initiative, a process of simplifying the myriad of forms that small businesses have to fill out in order to register, which we did under our government.

We took that away. We said it's more sensible and we can streamline the role of government; it's more sensible for small businesses to be able to file, in effect, through one vehicle and one form, and that's what's happening, and the second stage of that process was to simplify, as the Conservative government is now in the process of doing, it seems, the reporting mechanism for the payment of taxes.

How could any of us—not only could we not disagree with that, but I think we need to say that that's a good

thing, because anything we can do that simplifies life for business, large or small—in this case largely for small businesses, which we know are the main job creators in this province—anything that we do along those lines is to be applauded, and that is something that we certainly began.

When we look at the overall drive in terms of the whole financial situation that we're in, I know members opposite like to talk about a fiscal crisis that exists, and they do that—and I want to come back to this point—because it quite frankly makes it therefore a lot easier for them to justify the kinds of things they are doing. If you create a crisis mentality or approach, then it seems to them that people will accept any sort of cuts, because what you have to keep saying is: "We have a crisis. We have a problem. We have a huge crisis, and nothing short of just dismantling everything that we are doing is going to resolve that problem."

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): They're waking up. You're having an impact. They're waking up.

Mr Silipo: Well, I'm glad that they're waking up and that we're having perhaps a bit of an impact. The reality, at least the reality as we see it—because of course here we're talking about realities, certainly from the perspective of the speaker or the viewer, and that's the other reality in and of itself. But the reality—

Interjections.

Mr Silipo: Madam Speaker, if people want to interject, I just wish they would do it loudly enough that I can hear them, because I've got lots of time on the clock. So that's fine. I'm not in a hurry.

Interjections.

Mr Pouliot: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: With the highest of respect, Madam, my distinguished colleague is benefiting all members of the House by his wisdom and he has agreed today to share his experience, and yet—

The Acting Speaker: This is not a point of order.

Mr Pouliot: I'm somewhat appalled and shocked that a distinguished member, with the government, is constantly interjecting—

The Acting Speaker: This is not a point of order.

Mr Pouliot: —contrary to the rules of the House, Madam. Thank you.

Mr Silipo: I was saying—

Mr Gerretsen: Your time's up.

Mr Silipo: No. I tell my colleague over here that he can look up at the clock and that's the time that I have left. So he can settle in and relax.

Let me say this: There is very clearly a distinction and a fundamental disagreement between the premise upon which this new government is functioning and what we believe the reality of things to be.

Yes, there is a fiscal problem in this province. No one disagrees with that. If we did not believe that, we would not, when we were the government, have begun to in effect bring down government spending year after year, to take measures that, quite frankly, historically we have

not taken as a party. We did that, in some cases even irritating some of our closest political allies, because we felt that taking steps to reduce government spending, taking steps to be more responsible in the way in which we spent the money that belongs to the people of Ontario, was the correct thing to do as the government and was in fact the responsible thing to do as the government.

But the difference between that approach and what the Conservatives are doing now is that in their crisis mentality, they are just chopping left, right and centre without regard to who they are affecting, who they are hurting and what impact they are going to have. The sheer reality is that, yes, if they continue on this course, certainly they will balance the budget in a few years' time as they have set out. But the question that has to be asked is not so much, will they achieve that promise—and we'll have to wait and see whether they achieve that promise, I think the question we have to ask is, at what cost?

At what cost do we dismantle not just the structures of government, because again there could be probably a fair amount of consensus on the need to restructure the processes of government and the various levels of government, but at what cost in their yearning to get government out of the role of governing, in their yearning to replace the role of government with the role of volunteers? I think we have to ask ourselves, at what cost? Because what they will do in doing that is dismantle the very fabric of Ontario.

I always believe that it's useful to learn from the past. While the past may sometimes not be happy to dwell on or one may not be willing to dwell on it, I think we have to none the less keep that in mind. If we look back to what happened in the election, we have to acknowledge that clearly the Tories managed to convince many people—not a majority, but certainly under our system enough people that allowed them to come back with a majority of members—that the ills of this province were, if not mainly, at least in large part due to the actions of the previous government of which I was proud to be a member and, even more narrowly, particularly because of the situation with respect to social assistance, employment equity and, to a lesser extent, labour laws.

But while I think we can acknowledge and should acknowledge that in placing the issues in the election as they did, they managed to strike some chords, what we also have to do is to keep reminding this government that it is not through scapegoating people, it is not through blaming people, that you resolve the problems of this province. It is not by saying it's his fault or his fault or her fault that you resolve the serious problems we have in this province and the inequities we have in this province.

Maybe what we did as a government in terms of employment equity could have been improved upon. Maybe what we did with respect to the labour laws requires some refining. I don't know. Maybe with respect to the social assistance, we should have moved, as I wish we had moved, a little bit faster in terms of putting in place some of the supports to people who are on social assistance to help them get off social assistance, because

what we see now is this government dismantling even those initiatives that we put in place.

But you don't resolve—and this is the point I continue to come back to—the difficulties you have as a political force with the previous administration, by simply going way over to the other extreme, and that is what is happening.

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Mr Gerretsen: That's right. So you were at the extreme, were you?

Mr Silipo: We were not at the extreme.

One always has to leave room to learn, I think, not just from the present but indeed from the past. I have no shame in saying that in retrospect there maybe were things we could have done differently, could have done better. Who among us who's had the experience of governing would not admit to themselves, if not publicly, that that is the case and, for that matter, not just in the area of governing but indeed in many other things we are involved in as individuals and as people?

But the other fundamental issue that I know will come to haunt this government is that they gave people no idea—we're only seeing the effects of this now—of what they had in store. It's too easy for them to be able to say now that they are the government, that having formed the government and looked at the books, they now discover there is a much deeper crisis, as they put it, and therefore they have to cut even deeper than they were going to cut before.

For some time I fear that argument may find some support among the public, if current public opinion polls are any indication. But I say to my friends opposite, public opinion polls change with time, because public opinion changes with time. While I think you should enjoy the moment, I would not take a lot of comfort from where the public opinion polls are today, because those will change, they will change in many ways, before we next go to the electorate.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): We don't govern by polls.

Mr Silipo: I don't know who across the way said this government doesn't govern by polls, but I will be interested in coming back to that point a couple of years from now.

Let's look at what is driving this government. What is driving them, as I mentioned, is the ideological bent that they have to get out, they believe, of the role of governing. They are going far beyond simplifying the relationship between government and the private sector, which we can support. They are going way beyond that to a point that we will not be able to recognize—because they are, in effect, on the road to getting out of the role of governing.

You cannot expect that through tax cuts, you cannot expect that through the simplification of some of the process of government, you cannot expect that through the 20% across-the-board cuts—and I think more—in various government services there will be a structure and a society that will be recognizable a few years from now. I think that is a very fundamental issue.

I know when I look at that and when my constituents look at that—group after group, individual after individual, who serve people in a variety of ways on the front lines—they are frightened by where this government is taking this province. I think we should all be quite concerned, if not frightened, by where this government is going.

I say that with all respect to the government's right to govern, because they are the government. I don't question that. But equally I hope that people will accept my right to speak as strongly as I can and as clearly as I can about where this government is going, because I see that as a very fundamental point. This government is on the road to getting out of the role of government and, more important, of dismantling the fabric we've built in this province over a number of years, that sense of caring for each other, that sense of assisting people who are in need, that sense of encouraging people to become more independent, to be able to take care of themselves and their families but to do it in a way that doesn't blame the victim, that doesn't blame people for the circumstances they have fallen into.

It was not that long ago that we would speak about the recession we were in, and we know we've gone through the worst recession in 60 years. I don't hear a lot of discussion about that.

Mr Gerretsen: We're still in it.

Mr Silipo: We still are in it. We are coming out of it slowly. I think the signs are there. I know the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, who is here, would be able to confirm for us that the situation is getting better, albeit slowly. But the reality is that we have gone through a horrendous period, the worst since the Depression of the 1930s.

I think it's a bit naïve, if I may say so, for this government to believe that it is going to come in and just cure all those problems, cure that whole situation, with the approach it is taking.

I found it interesting that when I pushed the minister on the question of job commitment, we didn't get a clear answer, as I would have expected to get, a reaffirmation of the 725,000 new jobs. One can question, what does that mean? Does that mean they are not sure, not willing to say, they don't know? Yet they are proceeding as if they do know and as if their solutions are the only ones that make sense and anything else that comes across does not make sense. While this is something they are choosing to forget now, I hope they will learn—I think they will—after time in government that some sense of moderation makes more sense than trying to pretend you've got all the answers in a particular philosophical bent.

I think it's useful if we take a look for a minute at what is basically driving, beyond this philosophical bent, this government's actions. We know they have put themselves out on a limb with respect to some particular promises and commitments they've made.

First and foremost among those has been their commitment to the 30% tax cut, which, as one of the previous speakers pointed out, is really a 12% cut in the actual

taxes people pay, but they call it a 30% cut in provincial rates, and if they stick to that promise, that's what it will be.

Let's take a look at what that means. It's the equivalent, according to the numbers of this government, to taking about \$4 billion out of government revenues now. Therefore, that money has to be found somewhere: four billion dollars of cuts.

If you want to put \$4 billion into context, it's roughly the amount of money that this government spends and that we spent year after year for the last few years on the whole capital budget of the province of Ontario. Just imagine all of the capital infrastructures. The Minister of Transportation is here. His ministry in fact spends a lot of that money. Imagine not spending the \$4 billion that we spend year after year, and have for the last few years, on the capital infrastructure of this province. That's what you're talking about.

Of course the assumption they're making is that by putting that money into people's pockets, people will reinvest it into jobs. To some extent they will, but to a large extent they won't, because we can't control and do not want to control what people do with the money they put in their pockets. Some will spend it here in Ontario, others will spend it elsewhere. We know that when you make across-the-board tax reductions like that, the people who benefit the most are not the people who could use that money the most but indeed are the people who are better off.

Again, there is nothing we on this side have against that sense of equity and that sense of providing tax relief to people, but I am puzzled, since this government is so hung up on that tax cut, why not look at other ways of providing that tax relief in a way that does it across the board?

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But we fundamentally, at this point, disagree with the whole notion of the tax cuts. If you want to apply common sense, it flies in the face even of the same logic this same government is using. If there is a crisis—a fiscal crisis, an economic crisis, by their own description—you don't resolve that fiscal crisis by taking another \$4 billion out of government revenues, which may or may not have the impact that you wish it to.

What happens when you follow that tax cut with some of the other commitments in the Common Sense Revolution, a cut across the board in government spending, on average about 20%—perhaps higher; as time goes on we will see. We know that in the Common Sense Revolution the Conservative government said it would protect some basic services such as law enforcement and other areas that have to do with the safety of this province, and certainly primarily the area of health care.

Mr Len Wood: They said they'd resign if they couldn't.

Mr Silipo: They said they would resign, as my colleague reminds me, if they didn't keep those promises. I'm not going to hold my breath waiting for those resignations. But I do know we will not see that particular promise kept to protect certain areas of expenditure,

because already in the exchanges we've seen in this Legislature—the Minister of Health, when he was on this side of the House, was very vehement in wanting to get a clear answer from the Minister of Health of the day. Time after time, as he stands up in answer to question after question about the commitment to health care funding, "Are you going to cut funding to hospitals or not?" it would just take a simple, "No, we're not." But we didn't hear that from the Minister of Health.

We saw, in the last document that was released, a variety of cuts, including cuts in the area of health care, particularly in such areas as long-term care, delaying the expansion of that; a cut of \$33 million in the operations of hospitals, although that's claimed to be cash management; and in various other measures that affect direct services to people in the area of health care, where cuts are indeed being made and there's no clear indication yet that those funds are being redirected within the health care budget anywhere else.

In the area of education, an area in which I personally have a great deal of interest, having spent a number of years as a school trustee prior to coming to Queen's Park, I think it's fair to say that on this issue we'll have to just wait and see what exactly is the course of action this government takes. I do hope, because we didn't hear much about it in the throne speech, that despite the comments of the Minister of Education they will maintain the position that was taken by the now Premier when the report of the Royal Commission on Learning came out. That was that either in the area of early childhood education, where clearly this government and this party have for years been against the kind of investment and the kind of nurturing of our young people that we as a party believe is important—in many other areas, indeed in all other areas, they proclaimed that they were in agreement with the directions.

I hope they are, because we all agree, I think and I hope, on the need to restructure our school system, to continue to improve our school system with a continuing emphasis on what happens in the classroom. But again I fear that the fiscal agenda of this government will make any of those improvements, if not impossible, certainly much more difficult. Even though they continue to claim that any cuts will happen outside of the classroom area, I think we are seeing also that they have no idea where classroom funding stops and outside-of-classroom funding begins, again as admitted by the fact that the Ministry of Education is now in the process once again of resurveying the school boards to get a sense of where that distinction should be drawn.

What I'd like to do is to touch on a couple of other areas. We've heard a lot of discussion, as we should, about the whole issue of people on welfare. I think that beyond the program itself lies a fundamental principle, which is that we do have a responsibility—and I believe this very strongly—to protect and to support people who are in need.

We can agree or disagree about the extent to which a system like the social assistance system is being defrauded. I think again we can agree that there is some element of fraud, but I think that we part ways very

significantly—we on this side, at least, in the NDP caucus—with the actions of the Conservative government in again seeming to put so much of the emphasis on eradicating the fraud that's there, on dealing with a tightening up of the system, rather than putting the emphasis—and we know that the fraud level in the system, the level of abuse in the system, is not very high.

I'm happy to remind my colleague from Etobicoke-Rexdale that in fact when I was Minister of Community and Social Services we began a case-by-case review—every single file in the system. I think that by the time we left the government we were certainly, if not three quarters of the way through, at about that point. And what we had found by the time we did the first six months of that was that in fact the actual level of fraud was very little, was only present in a very minuscule number of cases and was not the fundamental problem that we have in the system.

Even though we improved it, and I'm assuming that the present government is continuing those measures, what is frightening is to have the minister of the day come to this House and make as his first public pronouncement in terms of a minister's statement not what he's doing to help people to get them off welfare, what he's doing to have the system changed around so that we are working with people to help them get off welfare, but in fact the establishment of the snitch line.

I think what that says is that where this government is placing its emphasis is in continuing the approach that it took during the election of portraying some things that maybe have a resonance with the public in some way and saying, "That's the problem, and if only we resolve that problem then our fiscal situation is resolved."

I think when the minister of the day, who is supposed to be, among others, but certainly the leading voice at the cabinet table for people who have fallen upon difficult times, largely through no fault of their own—I think it's really unfortunate if the best that minister can do is to give people advice about how to eat and what to eat.

I know that people are new to this job and sometimes they say things they wish they hadn't said, but I think in this particular case the minister's actions time after time—the tightening up, as we heard today, of the definition of "disabilities," after this government had gone to great lengths to say that people on disability and people with disabilities and people who are seniors would not be affected by the cuts. When we see those kinds of steps, when we see the emphasis on things like the snitch line, then I think we have to ask ourselves, what is driving this minister, this ministry and this government?

It certainly is not a sense of compassion. It certainly is not a sense of caring for people who have fallen upon difficult times. It certainly does not seem to be a sense that if we work with people, we can support them in getting out of the dependency of social assistance, in becoming more independent, in becoming better able to take care of themselves and their families.

That's not the message that's coming out of this government. What's coming out of this government is a very punitive approach. It is an approach that says, "You're the problem," to people who are on social

assistance and that tries to create an impression that if only we resolve that in the way that they are suggesting, somehow all of our other problems will disappear. I think that's wrong and I think that no matter how popular your actions may be today, people will realize over time that in fact your actions are wrong in that respect.

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There are many more issues that one could talk about. Certainly, all of the efforts that we are seeing in terms of cuts to child care, in terms of cuts to housing supports for women and children who are victims of abuse, in terms of the cuts to training programs, which have as the objective helping people on social assistance and unemployed people to get back into the workforce, all of those things that this government is cutting one by one, will have the result not only of increasing the disparity between rich and poor in this province but, more significantly or just as significantly, will not resolve the economic problems and will result indeed in a greater fragmentation of this society, in people who now are having a difficult time making ends meet having an even more difficult time.

We know that our society continues to change. I found some interesting reading in terms of looking at a document, called Ontario Beyond Tomorrow, published by the Premier's Council and the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy, and I would commend it to people. I know we all received a copy of this. I'd commend it to people for their reading, because it talks about the disparity between rich and poor.

Mr Gerretsen: Was that the last Premier's Council?

Mr Silipo: It's the last Premier's Council, but I remind my colleague that this was a group that was clearly non-partisan, did not hesitate to criticize the government of the day when that government was Liberal, when the government was NDP, and I'm sure would have had some things to say if this government had not shut this group down. Because what we did was bring together business people, people from the world of labour, people from various organizations, and in effect establish a very useful think tank of people who provided in an ongoing way some advice beyond the issues of the day, beyond the immediate crises and issues that we are all as politicians having to deal with.

I think that it's important as you look at this booklet that they point out the discrepancies that have happened over the years between rich and poor. The proportion of Ontario children living in poverty, to cite just one statistic, has risen—they used a three-year period, from 1987 to 1990—and is going to get worse, I would add to that; it's not their words, but I would add to that—as a result of the actions of this government.

I've spoken for far longer than I had wanted to, but I appreciate having had the opportunity, because it may not come for a while yet again. I've resisted the temptation to say a few things about my Liberal colleagues during this time, but there will be other occasions. I found it a little interesting that people on the Conservative side must be holding to very strict instructions in terms of what they're doing, because time and time again, when we're talking about such things as social assistance cuts and

things of that nature, I would have expected to hear someone wanting to remind the Liberal members about the fact that when they complain about the 20% cuts, they would have cut social assistance rates by about 30%, although, to their credit, they did also claim that they would have done that at the same time as they would have introduced other measures, which this government also said it would do, but now of course it has retracted on that.

Let me just say this: I'm glad to have had this chance. I just warn this government that in voting them into office, the people of this province did not in fact endorse every element of their Common Sense Revolution, and they should remember that.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I will try to keep my comments as brief as the previous speaker's.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your election or appointment as Speaker of this Assembly and I know you will conduct the business of this Legislature with the dignity and decorum that the people of Ontario have come to expect. I congratulate all members of this House.

I must also express my deep sympathy for the Eves family at this time.

I stand today as the newly elected member for Durham East. I am humbled today for two reasons: First, by the privilege and opportunity of being elected to serve and to speak in this historic place on behalf of the people of Durham East. The second reason I am humbled is because I now know the true meaning of the term "backbencher." If I were any further back, I would be in the antechamber. Seriously, I serve in a long tradition of Progressive Conservatives from Durham East, with Sam Cureatz who was interrupted for a single term by Gord Mills. Gord Mills was an intensely serious man who served his constituents well, despite his true British Labourist views. I assure you I will work as hard to represent Durham East.

I am confident that my involvement since 1980 in municipal government—two terms as a school trustee, local councillor and regional councillor—will help me to be effective in contributing to the Harris team. Having worked in management at General Motors for over 30 years will also help me to bring a commonsense, business approach to this government.

I must describe my wonderful riding of Durham East. We think of ourselves as the eastern gateway to the GTA. Most of my riding is in the region of Durham, with the exception of Manvers township with Reeve Terry Staples. I served on the Durham regional council with Garry Herrema as Chair, Mayor Dianne Hamre from the municipality of Clarington, Mayor Howard Hall from the township of Scugog, Mayor Nancy Diamond from Oshawa and Tom Edwards from Whitby.

My riding of Durham East is composed of many smaller communities like Bowmanville—my home town—Courtice, Hampton, Mitchell's Corners, Orono, Newcastle, Pontypool, Fleetwood, Blackstock, Port Perry, Victoria Corners—I could go on. Everett Kerr's bus tour throughout all of Durham East was a highlight during the election campaign.

I represent a very large geographical area with over 84,000 people in a large area which is approximately 50% rural and 50% agricultural. We are the fifth-fastest-growing area in all of Canada. Agriculture is one of the largest industries in Durham East. Apples are the current harvest and I invite each and every member this weekend to attend Applefest, which will be held in Bowmanville on October 14. This successful fall celebration brings together the very best from over our area, rural and urban.

Other successful agribusinesses include cash crops, pork, poultry, lamb, beef and many fruit and vegetable operations, including a very successful hydroponic garden operated by Hank and Lisa Mulders.

Natural resources are an important part of our economy, with significant aggregate industries like St Mary's Cement, located in Bowmanville. Large industries include Ontario Hydro at Darlington, Goodyear Canada, L&L Tool, Bowmanville Foundry and Cargowall.

The General Motors of Canada operation in Oshawa plays a very significant role in our community as the largest single employer. There are many smaller growing industries. Our area serves as a real incubator for the entrepreneur. For example, Miss Paula Lishman, a world-famous knitted fur and fashion designer, operates from Blackstock, Ontario, and exports to Europe and Japan as well as the United States. Ms Lishman was recently recognized by her peers as the businessperson of the year. Ms Lishman literally started her operation in the family garage and now employs over 150 people, many operating from their own homes; a real cottage industry, a real success story.

Courtice is a growth community and has one of the fastest-growing, home-based business areas in Ontario, providing everything from digital design, financial information and consultants; all this and quality of life too, with sailing on Lake Ontario, skiing at Mount Kirby and Bethany, snowmobile trails everywhere, hiking in the Ganaraska and Oak Ridges moraine, and sport fishing in Lake Scugog and the many streams in our area.

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Tourism is a whole new opportunity: With fall fairs, we recently hosted the Ontario rodeo finals in Orono; Cullen Gardens and Miniature Village; Bowmanville Zoo, the largest private zoo in Canada; Orono Exotic Cat World; Cadmis trout farm; the automobile museum; the military museum at Oshawa's airport; together with shopping in Port Perry, Bowmanville and Whitby.

Even our Premier has golfed at the Thunderbird Golf and Country Club. It's rumoured he's going to be golfing there with the Prime Minister next year. We have Durham College, which Gary Polonski believes should be a university centre; excellent health care facilities with Oshawa General soon to become a cancer treatment centre; and a flourishing artistic community. This is truly a great place to live, to work and to play.

Like most of you, I spent the past several months greeting people at their doors, in town hall meetings and at all-candidates meetings. People liked our Common Sense message that we're discussing in this throne

speech. In fact the people elected me overwhelmingly to work with the Harris team to bring a vision with leadership, hope and prosperity to Queen's Park.

I support life, the family unit and the traditional values that Ontario has always espoused: You cannot spend more than you earn; less government and less bureaucracy and opportunity for business to create real jobs.

We promised to deliver on our promises for safe communities for children and families, a better health care delivery system, an educational system focused on excellence in the classroom and one that is accountable. We also promised to give back the 65 tax increases.

We intend to deliver. In fact all of Durham region delivered the Common Sense message. They elected the five Blue Jays from Durham, and they are proof, with Julia Munro from Durham-York; Janet Ecker from Durham West; Jim Flaherty from Durham Centre; Jerry Ouellette from Oshawa; and myself representing Durham East.

You may be familiar with the old saying, it's often referred to as the Hobbesian axiom of equality, and it goes as follows. It's quite simple, actually. "Seeing something wrong for a long period of time gives it the appearance of being right."

Ontario over the last 10 years has been on the wrong road. Health care costs have doubled. Is it better now? Was that right? Educational costs have doubled. Is it better now? Was that right? The debt has doubled. Is it better now? Was that right? The mandate given to this government by the people of Ontario is to right these wrongs. Our leader, Mike Harris, has promised to deliver on these messages.

The most common concern I hear in Durham East is growth. We are the fifth-fastest growing area in Canada, as I mentioned before. We have accepted and will accept our fair share of growth and inherent challenges. We do need the infrastructure like the 407 east to Oshawa and Courtice to service both the economy and the people. We need GO services ensured to Oshawa and future growth to Bowmanville. We do not want to be part of the GTA.

Yes, there are interregional priorities like transportation and economic development. However, what municipalities have told me is they have a real need for partnership with the province and a friendlier municipal and planning act which will allow the municipalities to decide their planning and service priorities in harmony with agriculture.

Mr Harris and Mr Leach both addressed the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and challenged municipalities like those in Durham East to work towards just these same goals.

In conclusion, I must thank some very, very special people without whom I would not be here today: Mollie and my mother and father, who are no longer alive to support and encourage me; my wife, Peggy, and our five children. My oldest son is a second lieutenant in the Canadian Armed Forces presently stationed in Trenton; Rebecca, presently studying and travelling in Australia; Marnie, at the University of Western Ontario; Andrew, a wonderful triathlete in his OAC year at school; and

Rochelle, a beautiful and talented child in grade 12. I ran in this election for their futures and the future of all young people and to bring hope back to our collective future.

Henry Downing was the single most important person on my team. I could never thank him enough. Garnet Rickard was instrumental in giving me the supportive coaching, along with June Smith, Walter Beath, Bob Burke, Gary Young, Merril VanCamp, Marie Hubbard and Bill Lover. These and other people taught me the history of Durham East, which I'm proud to serve. I must thank my staff, Louise Jones, Pat Marjerrison and Steve Kay.

I am your humble servant from Durham East, and I thank you for listening.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): Before I offer my response to the speech from the throne, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate my fellow members on their personal election to this House.

J'aimerais également prendre cette occasion pour saluer et remercier un homme pour qui je n'ai que le plus grand respect, mon prédécesseur, M. Jean Poirier. Jean a représenté Prescott et Russell à l'Assemblée législative pendant 10 ans et demi. Au cours de ses quatre mandats, Jean Poirier a été un député exemplaire qui a toujours tenu à coeur les besoins de ses commettants et commettantes.

Je tiens tout particulièrement à remercier les gens de Prescott et Russell pour l'appui qu'ils m'ont accordé le 8 juin dernier. C'est un honneur et un privilège pour moi de représenter leurs intérêts devant l'Assemblée législative. Je m'assurerai d'être la voix de Prescott et Russell à Queen's Park, et non seulement la voix de Queen's Park dans Prescott et Russell.

D'autre part, j'aimerais saluer et remercier les nombreux bénévoles qui, au cours de la dernière campagne électorale, se sont impliqués dans le processus politique. C'est grâce à leurs efforts et à leur travail acharné si je suis en mesure de vous adresser la parole ici aujourd'hui.

De plus, je tiens à remercier mon épouse Gisèle, mes deux fils, François et Mario, et tous les membres de ma famille immédiate pour leur patience, leurs encouragements et leur appui tout au long de ma carrière en politique.

The riding of Prescott and Russell has many unique features which I would like to share today with the members of this House. It is a riding with a population of over 125,000, the sixth largest in the province in terms of population. It is a riding where nearly 60% of the population speaks both of Canada's two official languages. It is a riding where both the English-speaking and the French-speaking population live together in harmony. It is a riding which, in light of the current Quebec referendum debate, should be held up as a model to the rest of this country.

Eastern Ontario doesn't start in Oshawa only to end in Ottawa. To the east of our nation's capital, running along the Ottawa River, lies this wonderful corner of our province called Prescott and Russell.

La circonscription comprend le canton de Cumberland

ainsi que les 18 municipalités des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell, dont la ville de Rockland où j'ai été conseiller municipal pendant 10 ans et maire pendant 15 ans.

Au cours des derniers mois, j'ai eu l'occasion de visiter plusieurs villes et villages de la circonscription et de rencontrer des milliers de commettants et commettantes. De Queenswood Village à Sainte-Anne-de-Prescott et de Marionville à Chute à Blondeau, les gens ont partagé avec moi leurs besoins et leurs attentes envers leur nouveau gouvernement.

Leurs besoins et leurs attentes sont aussi variés que la circonscription ne l'est diverse. La Révolution du bon sens et donc le discours du trône ne répondent pas à leurs besoins ou à leurs attentes.

During the last election and to this day there were and there are no strong endorsements for the Common Sense Revolution in Prescott and Russell. By extension, the speech from the throne was about as well received in my riding as it was by the demonstrators here at Queen's Park last September 27. The people of Prescott and Russell are hurting. The Harris government promised them jobs and promised them a brighter future. Where are the jobs? The people of Prescott and Russell want to know. They will not find jobs in this throne speech and they will not find a brighter future under this government. 1650

Ce discours du trône s'attaque aux plus démunis de notre province. Dans les comtés unis de Prescott et Russell, plus de 25 % de la population ont besoin d'une forme ou d'une autre d'assistance sociale, que ce soit l'assurance-chômage, le soutien familial ou les indemnités pour les travailleurs accidentés. Il y a un réel besoin dans Prescott et Russell. Oui, c'est vrai qu'il y a des gens qui abusent du système, mais les coupures draconiennes de Mike Harris affectent sévèrement les familles monoparentales, les personnes âgées et les handicapés. L'Ontario de Mike Harris punit les pauvres et la classe moyenne.

La formation de nos ressources humaines est la clef première pour donner une lueur d'espoir à nos assistés sociaux. Dans les comtés unis de Prescott et Russell, nous n'avons que 450 places pour la formation de nos adultes, alors que nous retrouvons 1350 inscriptions à des cours divers de formation. L'évolution informatique et technologique que nous connaissons aujourd'hui exige une formation continue de nos employés actuels et de nos employés futurs. La formation dans les domaines de la haute technologie doit absolument devenir une priorité de ce gouvernement. Le campus satellite de la Cité collégiale à Hawkesbury serait en mesure d'offrir cette formation spécialisée pour les francophones de la province.

Au niveau de l'agriculture, Prescott et Russell possède les meilleures terres agricoles de la province, sinon au pays. Nous y retrouvons entre autres 526 producteurs laitiers. Parmi leurs produits, nous comptons le fromage de la fromagerie St-Albert, un fromage de renommée internationale.

L'aviculture et l'élevage du porc et du boeuf y jouent également un rôle d'importance. La culture de grains, dont la fève soya, est un secteur agricole qui pourrait connaître un essor économique si ce gouvernement

agissait pour mettre en place une stratégie de mise en marché.

Le domaine de l'agriculture et des affaires ruraux est un domaine qui nécessite également de la formation spécialisée. Dans Prescott et Russell, nous sommes choyés d'avoir le Collège d'Alfred qui offre aux agriculteurs francophones l'opportunité de recevoir cette formation spécialisée dans leur langue maternelle. Nous devons assurer la continuité et l'épanouissement du Collège d'Alfred. Voilà une stratégie visionnaire pour la création d'emplois de demain.

Economic development and job creation are of prime importance to Prescott and Russell, and the key to job creation is the tourism sector, a sector with tremendous potential in my riding. To the north lies the Ottawa River, historically known as Canada's most important waterway. By developing key waterfront areas we can attract tourists to Prescott and Russell and create jobs for the people of Prescott and Russell. If this government is serious about job creation, investment in the tourism sector is a must for both Prescott and Russell and eastern Ontario, a region which serves as a gateway for millions of tourists entering Ontario every year.

The people of Prescott and Russell are frightened by the Conservative agenda and, frankly, so am I. There are cuts to social assistance, cuts to health care, cuts to municipalities. Where and when will the cutting stop?

L'une des coupures les plus ridicules et des plus dangereuses est celle au budget de l'entretien des routes. Matin et soir, j'ai des commettants et des commettantes qui voyagent de Hawkesbury, de Plantagenet, de Rockland, de Cumberland, de St-Isidore, d'Embrun et j'en saute, tous pour se rendre travailler à Ottawa. Que ferontils cet hiver, puisque les routes 17 et 417 ne seront déblayées que de façon peu fréquente? Au nom des compressions budgétaires insensées, le premier ministre et son gouvernement mettent en danger la vie de mes commettants et de mes commettantes. C'est un désastre en attente.

I could go on and on about how this government has betrayed the people of Ontario with the speech from the throne, but the bottom line remains: The people of Prescott and Russell cannot and will not endorse the action outlined in this speech from the throne, and nor will I.

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): May I take this opportunity at the outset of my remarks to express publicly my condolences to the Eves family in the light of the tragedy that has befallen them.

Mr Speaker, may I also take this opportunity to congratulate you on your recent reappointment. I would like also to join the chorus and congratulate the honourable member for Simcoe East on his election as Speaker of the House. In the many years that he and I have known each other, he's always offered useful advice to me and has shown me the way to be an effective parliamentarian for the people. His most memorable saying used to be, "Some people are for it, some people are agin' it; I'm with the people." I'm not sure, but I think that was a suggestion to always be in touch with one's constituents, and I will heed his words, certainly.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to all my fellow members on both sides of this House, and I commit to work with them to secure a better, more prosperous Ontario.

The people of Ontario made a courageous choice on June 8 and ushered commonsense policies back to this province. Not only am I proud to serve as an MPP in this critical and historic time, I'm even more proud to serve under the able leadership of Mike Harris. He has seen fit to appoint me as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. I can report to the House that Minister Mushinski has been very supportive of me in my new role, and I'm grateful to her for that support.

But as the new MPP for Brampton South, I would like to thank the voters of my riding for their support of me and, through me, of the government and its real-change agenda. I will endeavour over the life of this Parliament to live up to the legitimate demands and expectations of my constituents. They told me that they wanted real change, that the status quo was not working, that government throwing more money at problems had failed, and that they wanted a government which would deliver on its promises. I say to them, we will deliver, we will keep our promises, and our real-change agenda will create new jobs, hope and opportunity both in Brampton South and throughout Ontario.

So permit me, Mr Speaker, to pay tribute to my riding of Brampton South and to the city of Brampton in general. There is no truer microcosm of this great province than my riding and city.

My riding has both urban and rural areas. You can see the diversity everywhere, from the villages of Huttonville and Churchville, small centres of farming and a quality lifestyle, to the busy streets of Brampton proper. Brampton is a city which, on successive weekends, hosted both the Holstein international auction and the Nylons a cappella singing quartet.

In Brampton as well we have seen a spurt of growth and development unparalleled in the area's history. Now, old-time residents can and do mingle with newcomers, many of whom are new to Canada as well, who bring their own rich traditions and heritage. Nothing better personifies the acceptance and promotion of the new Brampton's multicultural reality than Carabram, a famous and successful food and cultural event which occurs every July. This past July, over 60,000 people enjoyed Carabram, and Brampton is a better place for it. I might add that Carabram exists because of individual volunteers and the community involvement that we must continue to nurture, and not one penny of government money goes to support it.

Brampton is where I was married and where my two children, Alexander and Maximillian, were born. My wife, Lynne Golding, who is here in the members' gallery today, grew up in Brampton, and the Golding family has contributed an MPP—who was, I might add, a Liberal MPP, but I seek to correct the balance there—a mayor, a fire chief and many successful community leaders in the 120 years that the Goldings have called Brampton home. Brampton is a strong and welcoming

community and one in which I will raise my children with pride.

But Brampton is probably best known in recent years for my famous predecessor, the Honourable William G. Davis. As member for Brampton from 1959 until 1985, and as Premier of this province from 1971 until his retirement, Mr Davis showed just how some Brampton common sense could bring unprecedented prosperity and opportunity to Ontario as a whole. It is precisely this Brampton common sense that I hope to bring to this chamber again so that Ontario can once more create the jobs, allow the opportunity and afford the compassion which described its recent past. I have looked to Mr Davis for guidance and advice and he has not let me down. I intend not to let him or his neighbours down in the years ahead.

I would also like to recognize the efforts and work of Mr Davis's successor in Brampton South, my immediate predecessor, Bob Callahan. Mr Callahan has just completed 26 years of involvement as an elected public official and he richly deserves to be recognized for his contribution to Brampton and to Ontario.

Finally, permit me to recognize my stepfather, John T. Clement, who is with us today in the members' gallery. Mr Clement served in this House as the member for Niagara Falls from 1971 until 1975, acting in Mr Davis's cabinet as consumer affairs minister, Solicitor General and Attorney General. To him I owe many lessons about politics. Why, just recently John said to me, "Be humble—you're not that good." Wise words for a politician to follow, although I do hope in time to exceed his expectations.

I approach the throne speech from the vantage of someone whose professional life took him into many of the countries in central and eastern Europe as they emerged from the scourge of collectivism. I have seen at first hand how the state as the solution, as the alpha and omega of political, social and economic life, in fact creates more misery and individual destruction almost than can be imagined.

I have seen whole cities enveloped by the smog of environmental degradation. I have seen the privations inflicted upon women and children when a system which claims to provide for everyone in fact helps no one except the privileged few. And I have seen the lack of political freedom which stems from a lack of economic freedom and choice and the destruction of the soul which that entails.

It was the leader of the third party who earlier in this session invoked the Conservative philosopher Edmund Burke to warn against the excesses of ideology. I too share his concerns, but would refer him and the members of this House to another quote from Mr Burke which sums up both the reason why I decided to become politically involved and why we on this side of the House must act now, before it is too late. Edmund Burke said: "All that the forces of evil need to succeed are for enough good citizens to do nothing." I, for one, intend to do something.

Ontario was on the wrong track, a track designed to produce a loss of hope and opportunity, and I and my

colleagues intend to do something about it. We will act where previous governments have failed to do so and we will act decisively and quickly to get Ontario on the jobs track, the hope track and the opportunity track.

It is now or never. No other jurisdiction will wait on idle as we strive to catch up. The world is home to a globalizing and increasingly competitive marketplace, and either we shall allow individuals the time to find their opportunity and to create wealth and growth for themselves, their families and their communities or we shall surely resign ourselves to the dustbin of history like the collectivist authoritarians whose legacy I encountered in central and eastern Europe.

The throne speech makes clear there is much work before us. The people must make government responsive to them again and government itself must transform to reward personal initiative and risk-taking in the market-place, to revitalize our education, justice and health care systems and to support the individual and the family in our society.

The throne speech has set the foundations for that vision. By returning power to our citizens, we are putting our province back into the hands of all Ontarians. It is up to every single Ontarian to share the burden in solving our problems. There is indeed an individual responsibility which goes with not looking to government to solve every problem.

Some in our province are threatened by this, and those with a stake in the status quo seek to maintain it, seemingly at all and any costs. But I believe that there is no turning back, and that individual freedom and individual opportunity necessitate individual responsibility as well. This approach will work and will usher in a new dynamism and a flowering of wealth creation and the jobs and productivity which go with it.

Our approach means ridding the statute books of the job-killing labour legislation known as Bill 40 and the demeaning and self-defeating job quotas as found in the employment equity laws. It means reducing the size of government and reducing its regulatory fiat. It also assuredly means lowering the average Ontarian's tax burden, putting an extra \$210 per month in the average Bramptonian's pockets so that they can spend it, save it or invest it howsoever they choose. A tax cut is the best job creator in existence, and I am proud to be part of a government which understands this.

In closing, I am both humbled and proud of this moment: humbled by the mandate the voters of Brampton South have given me and proud to be able to carry it out; humbled by the enormity of the challenges which this government faces and proud that it has the courage to proceed.

It was a former Prime Minister of Britain who was famous for stating, "This lady's not for turning." Well, given the task which must be completed to restore the greatness which is so possible in Ontario, this government is not for turning either. We will not blink.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): It's a great honour for me to rise in the House today as the newly elected member for the riding of Port Arthur. As a person

born and raised in the great city of Thunder Bay, I take pride in calling myself a northerner and I recognize how truly blessed I am to follow in the footsteps of so many fine provincial politicians who have represented our area.

Personally, I am grateful for the support that has enabled me to reach this place of honour—from the people who put their trust in me on election day, from the hundreds of campaign workers who took time out of their busy lives to help me get here, and most particularly from my family, who gave me the inner strength to seek this high office.

Over the past few months, I've become familiar with the demands and expectations of this new job and can candidly admit that I am somewhat in awe of the responsibility that such a position entails. Part of that responsibility, I believe, is a recognition that as an MPP one needs to represent the interests of all your constituents and the differing needs, hopes and concerns that they express.

This responsibility becomes all the more daunting as the full impact of the Conservative throne speech becomes clear. Now, as a member of the official opposition and as a candidate who campaigned on the basis of a Liberal approach that was extremely critical of a debt load and a deficit that was strangling our economy, I cannot argue that serious fiscal restraint is not needed. Clearly we need to get our fiscal house in order.

However, the approach this new government is taking has ramifications far beyond what most people envisioned when they elected 82 Conservative members across the province. In its quest to meet its commitment of a 30% income tax cut, the Conservatives have set in motion a process that will take away all the gains that such a tax cut would provide while they chop away at the programs, services and economic stimulation that are desperately needed at this time.

At a time when millions in this province live with ever-increasing fear about their ability to cope, let alone survive, amidst the random cuts this government has imposed, and when the government virtually brags about further cuts to come, it's vital that this government come clean as to its end goal. No longer can they justify that their slash-and-burn policy is needed to bring the deficit under control when it has become abundantly clear that they are driven by a compelling political need to fulfil an irresponsible campaign promise that many Ontarians now, and most undoubtedly will in the not-so-distant future, ask them to forgo.

1710

The question now becomes, what price is this government prepared to pay to meet its ill-fated goal? Certainly they seem prepared to put an already precarious health care system in extreme jeopardy at a time when our health care needs continue to expand as our population ages. In fact, their promise not to touch the health care budget has already been broken.

Certainly they don't even try to hide the fact that our education system, once a great source of pride to everyone in this province, will be massively underfunded in the next few years, leaving our elementary and secondary school systems scrambling to stay afloat at a time when stability and direction are desperately needed and as higher education becomes an unattainable goal for most of the population.

What can one say about the government's deep and hurtful cuts to the social programs in the province, on the one hand piously talking about massive job creation while they strip away the support programs that allow people to rebuild their lives, to seek gainful employment and to look after their families in a reasonably dignified manner?

As a northerner and therefore someone familiar with the needs of the north, I find it astonishing and somewhat frightening that this government or any government could sanction cuts to services that are vital to the lives and safety of our citizens. Does this government's relentless cost-cutting zeal justify a decision to downgrade winter road maintenance in a part of the province that absolutely needs safe passage on already dangerous roads and highways? Is this government willing to risk the lives of northerners as part of that cost-cutting exercise? I can only implore the government to use some common sense on this issue.

I come from a part of the province that respects the role government plays in our lives. The people in the Port Arthur riding, including the communities of Murillo, Kakabeka Falls, Kaministikwia, Lappe, the township of Shuniah, have worked hard and long to play a responsible role in our area. They accept this responsibility as part of a partnership with the senior levels of government, regardless of party stripe, that have represented them over the years.

Today, I call on this government to uphold its part of the bargain, to recognize that the people in the Port Arthur riding and indeed throughout the north and throughout the province understand that changes must be made in the way government does business, that we need to tighten our belts and get on with the job, but this must not happen at the loss of lives and shattered dreams.

Ultimately, it comes down to what role the government should play in our lives, and like so many other institutions, the government needs the support of the people in order to reach its goals. Today, I say to the members of the government sitting opposite us, do not make the mistake of forging ahead with decisions that hurt millions of people in this province for the sake of ideology or a desire to keep a campaign promise that no longer makes any sense.

In order to maintain the trust of the people we represent, we must all be part of a difficult balancing act, and this government needs to understand that. So today I call on the government to temper decisiveness with compassion, to balance the need to eliminate our deficit with the need to retain hope in our society and to remember that not all decisions can be made in the isolation of a boardroom where number-crunching is the goal.

I ask this government to listen to all the people and not arrogantly assume that a tough fiscal decision is always the right fiscal decision. Look at the people affected by these decisions in order to see that a shortsighted reduction in spending can sometimes lead to a far greater cost in the future.

The future of this province is truly in our hands. Never let it be said that we did not remember that this province is made up of people of differing needs and aspirations and that our responsibility and that of this new government is to govern and make decisions based on our hearts as well as our minds.

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): As I rise to address this House for the first time, I have the honour of extending to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and through you to the Speaker, on behalf of the people of High Park-Swansea, our best wishes as each of you assumes your new responsibilities.

We join with the Minister of Finance, Ernie Eves, and his wife in this time of grieving the loss of their son, Justin. Our prayers are with the family and friends at this time.

For this 36th Parliament, it is my honour to represent the people of High Park-Swansea. I hope I shall be able to do so with the same dedication that has been demonstrated by my predecessors, many of whom are still well remembered by members of all parties in this House. I reflect particularly upon the contribution of the Ziembas, both Ed and Elaine; David Fleet; and especially Yuri Shymko, Alfred Cowling and even Premier George Drew.

Having served the people of High Park-Swansea for the past number of years as the senior alderman for ward 1 and then as the first directly elected Metropolitan councillor for Toronto-High Park, I hope to continue the high standards of public service set by each of my predecessors. The people of our community deserve and expect no less.

To my colleagues in this House, I extend my personal congratulations for electoral success. Many of us will differ in opinion and even in fundamental philosophy, but I hope we will enter and exit every debate confident that each of us has the best interests of our constituents and province at heart.

High Park-Swansea nestles at the mouth of the Humber River, at the westernmost extremity of the city of Toronto. I was raised in the riding, attended Keele Street public school and Humberside Collegiate and take great pride in the family values that are the hallmark of our community.

We are equally divided between homeowners and tenants, and like most of the Metropolitan area, High Park-Swansea represents the multicultural mix the United Nations has lauded as the most diverse in the world.

We are home to one of the largest urban parks in Toronto, and High Park-Swansea is home to Canada's first business improvement area, Bloor West Village, founded 25 years ago.

Although we enjoy a fine waterfront visually, pollution prevents public swimming every summer. It is our hope this government will now take speedy action the former government was reluctant to take to approve the western storm tunnel project that has received endorsement from both city and Metro councils, as well as approval of the waterfront regeneration trust and even the provincial Ministry of Environment and Energy. That action will do much to improve the western beaches, just as action a

few years ago brought relief for the eastern beaches. Since beaches are a natural resource not only for the city but for the province, we can only implore the Minister of Environment to give this matter her highest priority.

High Park-Swansea is home to people who are generous with their time and talent. It is without a doubt a community where volunteerism has managed to survive and even thrive in spite of government.

High Park-Swansea is the home of the High Park Braves, the 1995 Canadian Little League champions.

High Park-Swansea is home to some of the most active youth and seniors' programs in the city.

Our places of worship and schools are filled every day and evening with all manner of programs, most of them cost-recoverable and very few looking for government subsidy.

Our riding also reflects a demographic worth special note: More seniors live in High Park-Swansea than is the average for city wards. For that reason, we view with some concern the report recently issued by the hospital restructuring committee for the district health council that recommends closure of Runnymede chronic care hospital. In our submission to the district health council to be offered later this month, we will be offering an alternative that we hope will give new life to Runnymede and achieve the cost-efficiencies the Minister of Health needs in order to reallocate his spending priorities.

On a more general note, while our current system of urban government in Metro Toronto has served us well, most residents would agree that they are not only overtaxed but also overgoverned. There's no doubt we need to look for more efficient ways of governing, need to develop more equitable property tax systems and cost-effective ways to implement interregional coordination of services.

The sorting out of local government along with the aggressive encouragement of teleport development will not be easy, but it is essential if one wishes to jump to the forefront in the global economy, one that most certainly will be dominated by strong cities based within cohesive regions. This is an issue I know to be of particular interest to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

1720

We've all just recently emerged from a most vigorous provincial campaign. The people of this province were offered clear alternatives, and certainly none more forthrightly stated than the program of renewal offered Ontarians by Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party. Three parties laid their policies before the people and the people of this province made a choice that was crystal clear. The speech from the throne embodied the platform the people of this province considered and overwhelmingly endorsed.

Let's be very clear about this point because it's fundamental for this debate. The people of Ontario have made a decision. It was a clear decision, and each of us has been sent here to get on with the job of doing what the people of Ontario have told us to do. How each policy is to be implemented is open to discussion, and the

appropriate venue for that debate is in this House, but whether a policy should be implemented or not has already been decided by the people and it's our task to get on with the job of governing in their name and for their benefit as quickly as possible.

The NDP and Liberals might not agree with the decision of the people, but they must respect it and carry it out, and special interest groups also need to heed the decision of the people. In general elections it's not the best two out of three; it's not my way or the highway. It's the people's way, and in this general election they have made their position very clear.

They have told Premier Harris and this government that they expect every action to be taken to stimulate the economy. They want real job creation. They want job-killing labour legislation to be rescinded. They want jobs for our college and university graduates. They want equal employment opportunities for men as well as women and they want fair and equal employment policies in every workplace. They want government to begin to treat tax dollars with respect, to spend selectively and to make tough choices, like every householder is forced to do.

They demand that the tax burden be lightened. They expect bureaucrats as well as politicians to be held accountable. They want government downsized. They want honest, open, accessible government and no pandering to special interest groups, and they want all programs to be re-evaluated while protecting spending envelopes for health care, classroom education and law enforcement. In short, the people want more jobs, lower taxes and less government spending, and they want the enormous government debt brought under control.

For five years the Liberals thought they could spend, spend, spend and eventually repay easily with devalued dollars. So in spite of the most affluent times in recent history, our provincial debt mushroomed out of control. During the next five years the NDP government fed the mushroom in the simplistic, mistaken belief that you might be able to spend your way out of a deficit position. Ten years ago this province was virtually debt-free. Now it staggers under a debt load of \$100 billion with an annual service charge of close to \$9 billion, which works out to more than \$1 million every hour of every day of every week just to pay the bank its interest on our provincial debt. What a mess.

We've given our children a debt of \$100 billion to pay off and we still expect them to earn sufficient to keep the old age pension plan viable. No wonder young people today ask with measured anger why the generation before them, who lived through some of the most affluent times in history, has left them with such a dark legacy of debt to repay. Because of well-meaning but unaffordable policies of the past decade, everyone now is forced to face some short-term pain in order to get long-term gain. It will, however, be my concern that the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and those truly in genuine need be spared as much as possible from the full effect of the tough medicine every one of us will have to taste, and I mean everyone, including members of this House.

The way ahead is clearly outlined in the speech from the throne. It's a speech filled with common sense, the common sense of the people of Ontario. That's its real strength, and it deserves the complete support of this House. I'm proud to give my support to our Premier and his cabinet as they struggle to restore hope and opportunity for the people of Ontario.

It will be a bumpy ride, as some members from the opposition and third party have promised, but it's a ride well worth taking if we care for Ontario, if we care for Canada and if we truly care for the future of our people.

On behalf of the people of High Park-Swansea, I am honoured to lend my full support to the speech from the throne and for the government that has been given a very clear mandate to carry it out.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South): It's my privilege and pleasure to rise today for the first time in this new session of Parliament, and I want to begin by thanking my constituents, the people of Ottawa South, for once again placing their confidence in me. I pledge myself once again to do my utmost to represent their interests here in our deliberations at Queen's Park.

I want to take a moment to thank all of the people in Ottawa South who voted for me and to thank, on behalf of my wife and children, all those who voted against me. I have not lost my sense of the tremendous privilege and honour that has been bestowed upon me as a result of being re-elected to this Legislature.

So now we have a new government, a Conservative government, and I offer my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to government members and extend to them my best wishes as they grapple with the not inconsiderable challenges of the day.

There's an important question that I think we must at the outset of this Parliament try to answer, and that quite simply is this: What did Ontario voters vote for on June 8 of this year?

Now, many say that those who voted for the Conservatives on June 8 are hard-hearted, that they're meanspirited, that they're angry, that they were lashing out at what they saw as the dead weight in society, and especially those on welfare. This theory of course is especially appealing to Liberals and NDP, because by logical extension it means that all kind-hearted voters and all those motivated by the charitable spirit must have voted for us. And if only this were so. If only any one party here had a monopoly on good ideas or social consciousness.

I don't buy this, and neither do the people of this province. Having said that, however, I do believe that Liberals have a few more good ideas than the others and that, in the fullness of time, this will be well accepted.

I don't believe Ontario voted in the Mike Harris government because they were informed by mean spirits. I believe we have a Conservative government today because what Ontario wanted was significant change and because the Conservative Party held itself out as an agent of such change.

And now I want to raise the only real question before this Legislature today, the question which members will revisit with each new element of public policy introduced by this government over the next four years, and that question is this: What kind of change do Ontarians want? After all, not all change is the same. There's good change and there's bad change. There's change that will help Ontario and change that will hurt it, change that will improve our quality of life and change that will cause it harm.

I think it's fairly obvious that for this government significant change means, in large part, program cuts, especially cuts to social services, including cuts to welfare payments and cuts to women's and children's support programs. I have serious misgivings about the size and targets of these cuts, but I want to focus for a moment on the cuts targeting our children.

I am not at all certain, I am not all convinced, that when Ontarians voted for change they meant we should be cutting our already skimpy budgets for programs geared to the support of our children. I don't believe Ontarians voted to reduce our children's aid society budgets and our budgets for child abuse treatment and prevention programs. I don't think Ontarians voted for their government to cut back on children's mental health services or budgets for autistic children services. And I cannot accept that voters in Ottawa, for instance, even those who voted Conservative, voted for cuts to our Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa-Carleton, cuts to our Ottawa Youth Services Bureau and cuts to our Children at Risk program.

1730

Of course, in one sense cuts targeting kids are easy to make. You see, the damnedest thing about kids is they just can't get their act together to oppose these things. They don't organize themselves, they don't picket, they don't show up on the lawn outside here to protest and demonstrate, and of course they don't even bother to vote. I mean, is it anybody's fault but their own that kids are the subject of these cuts?

On top of their program cuts, why shouldn't the half a million kids on welfare share in the experience of a 22% cut to their families' welfare? If this means less food, no new clothes and fewer toys still, too damn bad. If welfare cuts mean, as studies have revealed, that parents with less money are under greater stress, which leads in turn to more child abuse, well, so be it.

Kids should have seen the impact of these cuts coming. They should have prepared for them.

I want members of this House to understand the seriousness of the situation for our children. I'm going to do that by drawing their attention to an important barometer of how our children are faring, and that's the teenage suicide rate. The rate of suicide for Canadian teens is alarmingly high when we compare it with other industrialized countries, including the United States. Our young people in this country, which has been voted two years running as offering the best quality of life for its citizens, our young people here kill themselves at twice the rate of Britain and Japan, and they kill themselves at five times the rate that they do in Italy.

This unfolding tragedy is especially pronounced among our teenage boys. For our teenage boys, their suicide rate has quadrupled since 1960, to 20 per 100,000 or one in

every 5,000 boys. I don't have the Ontario stats, but I don't see any reason to believe that Ontario deviates significantly from the Canadian statistics.

It seems to me that a society's teen suicide rate is a good indicator of how well it is meeting the needs of its young. Happy-go-lucky kids whose primary needs are being met, kids who believe their future holds promise don't kill themselves. However, unhappy kids, kids deprived of hope, kids with serious problems who are not getting help, these kids do sometimes, unfortunately and tragically, end their own lives.

These cuts to kids' programs and kids' welfare represent bad change, they represent harmful change, they represent the kind of change which I don't believe Ontarians voted for or want.

Now, there's little doubt that in the short term cuts to kids' programs are going to produce some savings. But these short-term savings will be greatly outweighed ultimately by the long-term costs. It's been estimated that every dollar spent on needy children today saves \$7 tomorrow; and if you put those kinds of cuts into perspective, you've got to ask yourself why it is that we had to make cuts to those programs, to that group which has no formal representation, which does not organize itself into lobby groups.

Why have we cut children's programs when we've been able to find money to help our snowbirds cover medical expenses in the south? Why have we cut our children's programs if we could forgo the income generated by speeders on our highways when we killed photoradar?

I want to offer a suggestion to government members, who I know are genuinely struggling to make only good cuts, cuts helpful to Ontarians, and that suggestion is this: Attaining your objective will be easier if you stop believing your accountability lies only to taxpayers. Your accountability, like that for all of us here, is to all Ontarians, including those who happen to be taxpayers.

Furthermore, I don't believe that taxpayers are purely one-dimensional, or want to be seen as such. The fact that they pay taxes is not their only or even their defining characteristic. You and I, we may be taxpayers but we do not measure everything government does solely in terms of how it affects the bottom line. If that were the case, taxpayers in this province would simply demand that government abandon all pretence of trying to be anything really more than the administrator of barebones services and programs.

I believe the taxpayers of this province expect this government, like all our governments in recent history, to take measures to ensure that those who are least able to fend for themselves receive help. Taxpayers expect this government to have a heart and to help care for our children, our sick, our elderly and our disabled. Taxpayers also expect this government to protect and preserve our natural environment for this generation and the generations yet to come. I saw nothing whatsoever in the results of June 8, 1995, that would lead me to conclude otherwise, and neither should the Mike Harris government.

Mrs Janet Ecker (Durham West): It is a privilege to rise in the Legislature today to deliver my first address in support of the speech from the throne, but before I start I would like to add my sympathy and prayers for the Eves family, as everyone else has done today. It is a tragedy.

I also have the dubious honour of speaking almost last on behalf of the government. Therefore, with a caucus that is this talented, most of the good lines have been used, so I will attempt to carry on.

I am honoured to have been elected to serve the riding of Durham West as a member of the Mike Harris government. While our riding has been ably represented by my predecessors, Jim Wiseman from the NDP and Norah Stoner from the Liberals, it is certainly my pleasure to be the first Progressive Conservative member to represent Durham West since George Ashe, who served with distinction from 1977 to 1987.

I would also like to congratulate all the members who were elected to this assembly. I look forward to working with you all and wish you all the best in your efforts to represent your constituents.

May I also congratulate the member for Simcoe East on his election to the Speaker's chair. I think I can speak for all of us when I say that our new Speaker is well-suited to his role and will capably preside over the proceedings of this assembly.

I would also like to mention the close working relationship that has developed among the PC members representing Durham region. As my colleague from Durham East indicated, as all of our first names begin with J, the communities have taken to calling us the Durham Jays, or to be more partisan, the Durham Blue Jays. For better or worse, we appear to be labelled for the duration. However, it has certainly been a privilege to work with such a team of talented and committed individuals. Jim Flaherty, Julia Munro, John O'Toole and Jerry Ouellette and I are dedicated to working for the betterment of Durham region.

Durham region, and more specifically my riding, Durham West, is largely composed of hardworking young families. They came to the communities of Ajax and Pickering to buy a house, to raise their kids and to make a better life for themselves. But they had begun to see government not as a partner in that enterprise but as an obstacle. Their increasing tax burden has been taking away the rewards of their labour and the government's increasing debt is mortgaging their children's future.

Our government's agenda, the Common Sense Revolution, is about restoring that partnership with the majority of hardworking Ontarians. It is a partnership of prosperity and growth, a partnership that promises hope for our future and the future of this great province.

It began five years ago when Mike Harris and the PC caucus went to Ontarians and asked them what was wrong with government and how to fix it. Their answers created the Common Sense Revolution, one of the broadest grass-roots policy initiatives ever seen in Ontario. We have continued to build this partnership with a throne speech that is consistent with this agenda.

The day we released our speech, a casual reader of the media may be forgiven if he or she thought that half the province was on the front lawn of Queen's Park objecting to our direction. If I could leave the House with two messages, they would be this: First, the majority of people in my riding voted for this agenda and they have been vocal in their support of it ever since; secondly, this government is not going to blink.

We ran on this agenda, we spelled it out clearly before and during the election, we were elected to implement this agenda and we will do it; make no mistake about it. Gone are the days of governance by interest group. Instead, we will govern for the majority of Ontarians, who want job creation, a balanced budget and tax relief. We will do this by dealing with our own spending problem now. By doing so, we are preserving our

economy and our province for tomorrow.

One of our major changes will be welfare reform. This government believes that the best form of social assistance is a job. When a person has a job, he or she is self-reliant, contributes to the economy, has a sense of self-worth and has potential for the future. Through workfare and learnfare we will break the cycle of dependency by investing in Ontario's most important resources, its human resources. I was honoured to be chosen as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and I look forward to participating in making these changes and reforms happen.

Our government has been subjected to a daily barrage of criticism from across the House about the changes we are making in this area. I can appreciate their concern, but we need also to think about those hardworking Ontarians who are struggling every day to provide for their families without a dollar of government assistance. We have a responsibility to those people as well, and we are fulfilling that obligation by putting our own financial house in order to encourage growth and job creation.

As the MPP for Durham West, I have been given the privilege of representing a riding that not only endorsed our government's agenda but is actively working to further our objectives. For example, the Durham Region District Health Council, in cooperation with the Durham hospital council, put forward a plan this year that will restructure and rationalize hospital services in our area.

Faced with growing population pressures and limited financial resources, the DHC and the hospital community recognized the need to work together to develop a regional health model that would guarantee high-quality care, accessibility, cost-effectiveness and equity. I commend all the committee members for a difficult job well done, and I thank our Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, for his guidance and for adopting the recommendations of this group.

Efforts to make the best use of taxpayers' money are common in my riding. The Ajax-Pickering hospital, in an effort to cut costs and save jobs, implemented a program called MASH, making all savings happen. By turning to their employees and asking them to recommend cost savings, the hospital has been able to successfully forestall layoffs and make their operations more effective.

It is a model that I hope many other hospitals in this province would follow.

Such efforts are not limited to the health care community. Last year the town of Ajax implemented the STARS program, saving the town of Ajax real dollars. We like acronyms out there in our region. This was another employee-driven initiative that gave everyone the opportunity to reduce costs without cutting staff or services and without taking days off. With every employee as a partner, buying into the principle of doing better with less, their ideas generated over \$590,000 in annual savings.

The STARS program exemplifies the kind of cooperation needed from all regions, municipalities and agencies in Ontario. It worked in Ajax, and I believe it can serve as a pilot model for cost cutting throughout the province. In fact the STARS program has made celebrities out of those who made a difference and they will be featured by Eric Malling on W5 later in November. I'd like to congratulate the town of Ajax for this success.

I would be remiss if I did not also commend the town of Pickering for its skill at running a debt-free operation with zero budget increases and zero tax increases for three straight years, an excellent example for all of us to follow.

But reducing the cost of government and ensuring that our tax dollars are used most effectively is only part of the equation. Our government must also be prepared to allocate its resources to those areas and individuals most in need. Durham region is a case in point. We face an increasing disparity between a growing population and government funding levels. Between 1986 and 1991 our population rose by 25%; by 2006 it is projected to grow another 40%.

This growth is occurring at a time when all governments are faced with spending restraints. This has led to funding inequities in some services. For example, hospital funding per person in Durham region is 40% lower than the provincial average and 60% lower than in Metro Toronto, yet we have one of the highest population growth rates. The situation is similar for children's services, where funding in Durham region is \$187 per child while in Metro Toronto it is \$427.

I look forward to working with our government to address these inequities, but first we will put our own financial house in order. Not for this government the practice of the last 10 years, where governments across the way attempted to solve problems by throwing money we didn't have at the problem.

Before closing, there is one final issue I would like to raise, and while it is not strictly related to spending restraints, it does indicate a fundamental principle of this government. We are serious about letting those closest to the people determine the kind of development that will take place in their communities. This trust in local government was demonstrated when Premier Mike Harris dismantled the NDP's bureaucratic monolith, the Interim Waste Authority. Municipalities were given back the right to manage waste, and Durham West is no longer bound by an ideological decree that would have forced us to accept a superlandfill site.

As we continue to empower municipalities, I look forward to working with the mayor of Pickering, Wayne Arthurs; the mayor of Ajax, Jim Witty; and the Durham regional chairman, Gary Herrema.

There are many difficult decisions needed to get Ontario back on track, and this government is prepared to make them. We are also prepared to continue to build partnerships with the hardworking, taxpaying, law-abiding Ontarians who expect us to live up to our commitment—they demand that we live up to our commitment—of prosperity through less government, job-creating tax relief and real welfare reform. It is a privilege and an honour to be part of it.

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): First, Mr Speaker, I would like to offer my deepest sympathy to the Ernie Eves family. Ernie is a very good friend of mine.

It gives me great pleasure to address the speech from the throne, not the budget. Too bad. We were expecting a budget, but I guess we will have to wait another five or six months.

I've listened very carefully to the speeches that were made today and for the last week, members saying how proud they are of their riding. I am proud of representing Ottawa East, but the problem with being a member—not a Liberal member but an elected member—from the Ottawa-Carleton area is that people have a tendency to refer to us as fat cats. Today I want to take this opportunity to talk about people, the have-nots, of my riding because, as I said, we are no longer fat cats. For so many years we had to depend on the federal government to provide us with jobs, but times have changed. People are looking for jobs, and the welfare cases in Ottawa-Carleton have increased tremendously over the last five or 10 years.

1750

I would like to tell you that my people are hardworking people, but there are no jobs; there are no jobs out there. I feel sorry for these people because they have very little education. I happen to represent the lowest earners in the Ottawa-Carleton area, and when you look at the welfare cases in the Ottawa-Carleton area you're looking at 111,000 cases of welfare, and 40% of those cases are children. As the member for Ottawa South mentioned, how can children defend themselves in this House? Then 29% are single; 32% are unemployable; 17% long-term-disabled; 11% working poor, and listen to this one: 10% highly skilled people. As I said, fat cats no longer.

I think it's very unfortunate that in the last couple of weeks I've had to listen to ministers making announcements and making my people suffer, because they will suffer. It doesn't matter what the government intends to do, they will be suffering for years to come. I realize that the government is trying to do something, but last week was the most gruesome and the most despicable week I have spent in this House in the last 10 years. Not one good announcement was made.

The very first one was a cutback in the welfare cheques by 22%, and a couple of days after we all read

in the newspapers that after doing some research, maybe a 15% or 16% cut would have met the obligations of the government. So where will this extra 5% or 6% go? We all know where: to pay for that promise that your government will decrease provincial income tax by 30%. So you are feeding off the poor people, that's what you're doing.

I would like to address three very special cases. The first one is the battered women's shelters that were knocked off, or will be, as of January 1.

In my riding, j'ai une maison qui s'appelle la Maison d'Amitié, un nom très propice pour la simple raison que c'est une maison où les femmes violentées peuvent rencontrer des amis. C'est la seule maison francophone, et on parle de fermer cette maison dès le 1^{er} janvier. Alors, la question que je pose au gouvernement, que je pose au premier ministre, c'est : à quel endroit ces femmes violentées, ces enfants violentés, peuvent-ils trouver plus de sécurité ?

Pourtant, dans le discours du trône nous avons parlé de communautés sécuritaires, nous avons parlé de créer des emplois. Mais par contre, aucune annonce n'a été faite jusqu'à maintenant pour la création d'emplois. On parle d'abolir des programmes. Alors, les maisons d'hébergement fermées dans mon comté vont contribuer au sort du gouvernement pour les deux prochaines années.

Pourtant, on a fait des promesses que nous étions pour trouver des solutions, des alternatives. J'ai entendu la ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine dire en Chambre que «nous allons trouver des programmes». "We will find other alternative programs." I'm asking the minister to stand in this House now or Monday and tell us what the alternatives are for these children and mothers. Je crois que cette atrocité a été faite pour épargner très peu de sous, de \$5 millions à \$7 millions.

I have another house in my riding, called Harmony House. I feel sorry not only for the residents of Harmony House but for the people who have worked so diligently for the last 23 years to make this home a real harmony house. These people have a very small budget of \$240,000 a year—80%, mind you, is from Comsoc, social services—and they provide services for 17 families. I'm talking about mothers and children. It's a block of 17 apartments, and they also do counselling for 70 former residents, and this will be gone by January 1. Why cut and save?

Interjection: The minister said it wouldn't be long.

Mr Grandmaître: That's right. The minister said, "No, don't worry, we'll replace it with something else." We're still waiting. What are the alternative programs? We haven't heard from the minister, and we're all anxious to hear from the minister. But I realize that you have to save in order to pay the rich. You have to save in order to meet your 30% commitment, 30% reduction. I feel sorry for these people and also for the people of Ontario.

Mr Harris and his government at the present time are a very popular government, but I want to remind you, when you go to bed this evening, read all your paper clippings, maybe read them every night, because it's not going to last. That's a warning; I've been there. I remem-

ber when we were at 50% and 52% and 53%, and you are close to that percentage right now. I want to remind you to save those clippings because they're not going to last too long.

I'm warning you now, because two years from now a lot of you will stand in this House and say, "I didn't think it was that severe." I think you don't recognize what you're really doing in this province, what you're doing to families, what you're doing to mothers and children. I don't think it's going to work.

Mr Hastings: But you did that with the province before.

Mr Grandmaître: My friend is heckling, but at the same time I think we tried to respond to the needs of our mothers and children, and this is not the way that this government will succeed.

There's only 50 seconds left. I know there's a referendum in the province of Quebec and I want to offer my services to the Premier, to his government, that if I'm needed to fight for a No vote, je suis prêt, je suis disponible, je suis un fier Franco-Ontarien, un Canadien.

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): First of all, Mr Speaker, I'd like to, on behalf of my family and the residents of Hamilton Mountain, offer our sincere condolences to the Eves family.

I would also like to offer you, sir, our congratulations on your newly appointed position, and I'm sure you will serve this Legislature with fairness, equality and integrity.

I'd also like to congratulate all my colleagues on both sides of the House on their respective elections and reelections. As well, sincere thanks go out to all the people who are responsible—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member for Hamilton Mountain, the time is up. We'd ask you to do this at another time, if that would be appropriate.

Mr Pettit: Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: That might be a lesson for this House.

On Thursday, September 28, 1995, Ms Fisher moved, seconded by Mr Maves, that a humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable Henry Newton Rowell Jackman, a Member of the Order of Canada, Knight in the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, doctor of laws, bachelor of laws, bachelor of arts, Honorary Colonel of the Governor General's Horse Guards, Honorary Colonel of 429 Squadron at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Honorary Captain of the Fifth Canadian Maritime Operations Group at Halifax, Nova Scotia, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us."

On Monday, October 2, 1995, Mrs McLeod moved that the address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

"That this House profoundly regrets that the new

government has put forward an agenda that is a breach of trust for Ontarians who were promised jobs and a brighter future and that therefore this House condemns the government:

- "1. For its litany of broken campaign promises.
- "2. For its failure to reaffirm its plan to see the creation of 725,000 jobs.
- "3. For its failure to reaffirm its commitment not to cut health care funding.
- "4. For proceeding hastily to cut welfare benefits while the promise to help people get off welfare and into the workforce goes unfulfilled.
- "5. For its failure to put forward a constructive agenda and for instead practising the politics of punishment and intolerance.
- "6. For its overwhelming and clear commitment to put Ontario on a path toward higher unemployment, a widening gap between the rich and the poor, a health care system faced with cutbacks and threatened with user fees, reduced access to education and policies that benefit the wealthy most at the expense of the most vulnerable in society."

On Tuesday, October, 3, 1995, Mr Rae moved that the amendment to the address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

"That this House further regrets that the speech from the throne shows that this government has chosen to attack the vulnerable and abandon basic services that the people of Ontario depend on, and condemns the government for:

"Creating a fiscal crisis in Ontario by promising an irresponsible 30% tax cut for the wealthy, then implementing cuts of somewhere between \$6 billion to \$9

billion in basic services for people in order to pay for these tax breaks;

"Failing to put the basic human needs of the people of Ontario ahead of irresponsible tax giveaways;

"Failing to honour its commitment to protect the most vulnerable among us, and instead imposing massive cuts to social assistance that hurt children, seniors and those with disabilities;

"Abandoning the basic protections for working people by cutting health and safety employment standards and wage protection as well as freezing the minimum wage;

"Breaking its promise to protect health care by cutting \$132 million from the health care budget including cost-saving initiatives such as birthing centres and the photo health card and by threatening Ontario's seniors with user fees on the Ontario drug benefit plan;

"Giving up on the 500,000 men and women looking for work by slashing job training, including a special program to give 66,000 young people their first job and day care funding to let single parents find work, and offering no help or hope in place of these programs."

The first question to be decided is Mr Rae's amendment to the amendment to the motion.

All those in favour of Mr Rae's amendment to the amendment to the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

By previous agreement of the House, the division on this question will take place Monday next.

The time being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

The House adjourned at 1805.

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Wednesday 11 October 1995

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Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 11 octobre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 octobre 1995

The House met at 1331. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

QUEEN STREET MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): Yesterday at 12 noon a number of residents from Parkdale and Fort York demonstrated in front of the Minister of Health's office. The purpose: to stop the opening of a new jail at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre.

Why would ordinary citizens want to sacrifice their time to demonstrate? They were promised by the Conservative candidates that a Mike Harris government will not open this jail for the criminally insane in a residential neighbourhood near 12 schools and 15 day care centres. We are reminding the new Minister of Health, the Honourable Jim Wilson, that by adding this jail he will hamper our progress towards rejuvenating our community.

The minister should know two facts: First, anyone with a mental health problem as far away as Peel is brought to the Queen Street Mental Health Centre and then as quickly as possible released on to the streets of our community. Over 70% of the patients are readmitted a few weeks later. Literally thousands of patients are walking around as though our community is a ward without walls. Second, police reports indicate that in 1994 the police were called over 300 times to find escaped patients from this centre.

Surely all of us realize that the present policy is already causing the destruction of our community. Adding a jail cannot be beneficial. I hope the minister will keep the promise and stop this insane policy.

HIGHWAY 17

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Residents of Terrace Bay, in my riding of Lake Nipigon, continue to live in fear: fear brought on by the total lack of understanding of this government vis-à-vis safety along Highway 17.

The highway runs through the heart of this picturesque community; 70% of Terrace Bay residents live along the southeast side of Highway 17 and yet the public, separate and secondary schools are all located on the northwest side of Highway 17. Simply put, children must cross this very busy and truck-congested highway on a daily basis just to get an education.

The Ministry of Transportation promised it would address the situation once and for all by last spring, and yet to this day nothing has been done. Surely the ministry can provide solutions in this regard and help to alleviate the daily, legitimate concerns of the parents.

The ministry and the minister, and he has that power, must act now before one of us rises in this chamber and

charges the minister for having blood on his hands. He has that responsibility.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): The citizens of this province are being ill served by the auto insurance system currently in place. Bill 164, which was introduced by the previous NDP government, is a costly, complex and unfair piece of legislation that is not working for Ontario drivers.

It is not working because premiums have risen by 20% in the past few years and will continue to increase by double digits under this present system, it is not working because auto accident victims do not have the right to sue for damages above the no-fault benefit, and it is not working because the number of fraudulent claims is increasing, jeopardizing the economic viability of many small insurance brokers. The affordability and accessibility of auto insurance for Ontario drivers is at risk if we do not reform the present system.

We must begin by repealing Bill 164 and introducing or restoring measures to ensure that the drivers of this province have access to affordable auto insurance. This should include restoring victims' right to sue for significant economic loss above the no-fault benefit, making certain that we facilitate the availability of optional excess coverage, modifying payments for rehabilitation and decreasing the administrative costs of the Ontario Insurance Commission.

It is our duty to the drivers of this province to make certain that they have a fair and affordable auto insurance system. The current system is not working. The many letters and complaints that I have received from Hamilton Mountain residents bear witness to this fact. I would like to see our government make this issue a priority during this 36th Parliament.

NATIONAL STUDENTS' DAY

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): I would like to acknowledge the fact that today is National Students' Day. Traditionally such a day has represented the beginning of student election campaigns and a means to communicate student information and focus attention on student rights. Today it represents much more.

National Students' Day has been formalized by the Canadian Federation of Students, and by universities and colleges right across Canada. It is a symbol of student aspirations, opportunities and potential.

However, the Conservative government's post-secondary education agenda, or lack thereof, is threatening the very fabric of student life. The uncertainty surrounding funding and commitment levels by the government, tuition increases and deregulation, student loan restructuring and institutional reorganization has created a very stressful and gloomy environment for students. Students are demonstrating on campuses across Ontario today to focus attention on these critical issues.

The lack of leadership from the Minister of Education and Training, his failure to establish a cooperative approach to education planning and his blind faith in the virtues of budget slashing threaten to jeopardize the accessibility, integrity and quality of our colleges and universities.

This National Students' Day should be a time for students to celebrate the future opportunities that education will provide them, not to contemplate the very future of that system itself.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I'd like to direct my statement today to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. On the eve of the Northeastern Ontario Municipal Association meeting in Hearst, I would like to take this opportunity to raise the issue of cuts to municipalities.

Yesterday, in my response to the throne speech, I mentioned briefly that in my riding of Cochrane North the town of Cochrane and the town of Hearst will receive considerably less money in this year's subsidies to maintain and construct roads in the area.

Hearst was to receive \$130,000 for the design and engineering of Highway 11, the main artery in the area. Now they will only receive \$65,000, a reduction of 50%. Cochrane was to receive \$50,000 for road construction. Now they will only receive \$6,500. Add to this the Ministry of Transportation plans to cut the use of snowplows and sanders on the highways in my area, and it will create a real problem.

1340

Perhaps municipalities should get into creative financing, Mr Minister. Perhaps this is what the municipalities are going to have to do, with the cutbacks your government is proposing.

Many more in the north will be hurt by these actions, with a possible cut of \$9.8 million on highway improvements in northern Ontario. The construction and maintenance of roads in the north is a priority. Without ongoing funds from the Ministry of Transportation for this purpose, the movement of goods and services and people in the north will be stymied.

With the federal government's reduction in transfer payments to the province and now with this government's proposed reduction of 20% in funding to municipalities, a disastrous situation will occur in the northern part of this province. Essential services to the north will be cut and people will be laid off creating even more unemployment in an already high unemployment area.

BOWMANVILLE APPLEFEST

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to advise the House of a very special event to be held in my riding this weekend in Bowmanville, the festival of apples.

I am extremely pleased to invite all members of the Legislature to attend the sixth annual celebration, to be held on Saturday, October 14, from 9 am to 5 pm in

Bowmanville. Fresh apples, hot apple fritters, unique crafts, quilt demonstrations and farm machinery are just some of the attractions. You will find Applefest and the community of Bowmanville a wonderful host, and I invite you to join us this weekend.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Last week the community volunteer centre serving Kingston and Frontenac county received notice that its provincial funding of nearly \$18,000 will be terminated. This decision to cut funding to this and eight other volunteer centres across the province is a glaring contradiction to the message in the throne speech, which said that the government will lead, promote and encourage volunteerism in this province.

Ontario's network of volunteer centres is the primary resource for volunteerism in the province. In my riding, the volunteer centre is the keystone to the infrastructure required for supporting local volunteerism. Over 225 agencies rely on the centre, and it's supplied nearly 700 volunteers so far this year.

Volunteer centres across the province supply over 8,500 agencies and last year interviewed over 60,000 volunteers. In addition to providing volunteers, they provide management consulting on a cost-effective basis to volunteer organizations, including screening criminal record checks on potential volunteers.

Local demand for volunteers will escalate as a result of this government's cuts to social service agencies. The centres will not be able to meet this increased demand now. It makes no real common sense for a government that promotes volunteerism to at the same time cut funding from organizations that provide agencies with quality volunteers to carry out their activities. I urge the government to restore financial support to volunteer centres so that they may meet their mandate.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): A recent political cartoon had Mike Harris and caucus members dressed as Roman gladiators charging with swords swinging. The caption read "Women and Children First." That best describes the cuts now being made to counselling services at second-stage housing.

The minister responsible for women's issues said the government's only mandate is to provide core services. Surely she can't mean only the bricks and mortar of a shelter or second-stage housing. If women and children are to live independently and free of fear in the community, they need support services too.

The YWCA in Sudbury operates a shelter and second-stage housing. In 1994, 381 women and 256 kids used the shelter. Another 21 families lived in second-stage housing; 1.5 social workers provided counselling to the latter group, and one of these counsellors also helped at the shelter. The elimination of counselling services affects women and children in both facilities.

Unlike London, which the minister used in her reply, victims in Sudbury just can't go and shop around for services elsewhere. There are only two other agencies in the community which specifically help abused families.

The Sudbury Family Service agency has one full-time social worker. The CAS has one full-time worker who counsels children and coordinates services for child witnesses. Ironically, last Friday staff at CAS were told by the Ministry of Community and Social Services that this funding was not guaranteed for next year.

The government's letter to the YWCA said, "We are getting out of service areas we simply no longer can afford"; a far cry from your own blueprint for justice when you said the issue of financial costs paled in comparison to the moral demand. This government's action will only serve to send women and children right back to the violence they were trying to escape.

BALA CRANBERRY FESTIVAL

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): It's my pleasure today to speak about a unique tourist attraction in my riding, the Bala Cranberry Festival, which occurs this coming weekend. As I speak, people in Bala are standing knee-deep in bogs carrying out a rich local tradition, the annual cranberry harvest. This Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the 11th annual Cranberry Festival will be held in Bala in the heart of my riding.

Bala is the home of the only two cranberry bogs in Ontario. Although the commercial cranberry harvest has been taking place in the Bala area for a little over 30 years, the market for cranberries and their related byproducts has grown dramatically. The Bala Cranberry Festival has become a major tourist attraction for central Ontario, attracting up to 25,000 visitors to Muskoka, some from as far away as the United States and Europe.

The cranberry industry and the festival provide an extraordinary boost to the local economy, and they're examples of how to make Ontario a popular year-round tourist attraction.

I would like to extend an open invitation to anyone to come to Bala this weekend to enjoy the cranberries, some friendly Muskoka hospitality and the beautiful autumn colours. In the wake of the recent Oktoberfest celebrations, why not try a fresh glass of healthy cranberry juice.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): This afternoon I will be introducing a bill to repeal quota-based employment legislation in Ontario. When passed into law, the bill will signal the restoration of the merit principle in our province's workplaces.

That will be good news to the workers and entrepreneurs of this province, including those who have taken the time to be with us today: Sam Singh, Judith Andrews and Sam Hundal.

We are introducing this bill because we believe legislated hiring and promotion quotas are unnecessary, unfair and ineffective.

They are unnecessary because discrimination in the workplace is already against the law in this province under the Human Rights Code.

They are unfair because they interfere with an employer's ability to hire the best qualified candidate for the job. They are ineffective because they do not address the root causes of discrimination.

And job quotas result in significant costs, both for employers, who must comply with the legislation, and for the government, which must administer the cumbersome bureaucratic system that kind of legislation creates.

Our approach to workplace fairness is to develop a sensible, cost-effective, equal opportunity plan that will support employer and employee efforts to remove workplace barriers and share equal opportunity expertise. We are now working on the development of a plan which will promote fairness in the workplace for all Ontarians. In the longer term, we will reform the Ontario Human Rights Commission to ensure that it fulfils its mandate to help victims of discrimination more effectively and more efficiently.

When it is passed by the Legislature, the bill will be a major step towards building a province in which all Ontarians are afforded equal opportunity in employment. 1350

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): As part of the government's commitment to repeal legislative hiring quotas, related provisions in the Education Act are included in this bill.

It is also my intention to revoke related Ministry of Education and Training policy/program memoranda 92 and 111 once the repeal bill comes into effect, as they will no longer apply.

The Ministry of Education and Training is now working on an equal opportunity plan for the education sector that will have two components. First, it will include a policy statement for school boards, colleges and universities, designed to promote equal opportunity in employment and freedom from workplace discrimination and harassment. The second part, an anti-discrimination education program, will build on policies such as those encompassed in the Common Curriculum and the harassment and discrimination policy for Ontario colleges and universities. This program will promote an educational environment that accommodates the needs of all students and reflects the life experiences and viewpoints of a diverse society.

I look forward to working with members of the education sector on these important initiatives.

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): My honourable colleague the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation has introduced a bill to repeal legislated employment quotas in Ontario.

I am pleased to announce that related sections of the Police Services Act will also be repealed as part of that bill in order that all Ontarians, including our police services, are not constrained by unfair, unnecessary and ineffective quota-based hiring and promotion practices.

Police services across this province have adopted race relations policies and put into place barrier elimination practices. Moreover, they are achieving their transition to community policing in part by reflecting the diversity of the communities they serve.

It is clear from these achievements that police services

do not need the heavy hand of legislation to accomplish the goal of a barrier-free, discrimination-free policing service in Ontario.

We will ensure that police services continue, as they have so admirably done over the past few years, to operate in accordance with the Police Services Act, which stipulates that police services be sensitive to the pluralistic, multicultural and multiracial character of Ontario society and that they be representative of the communities they serve.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome a few individuals in the east gallery here for today's announcement: John Miller, the chairman of the Police Association of Ontario and a director of the Ontario Provincial Police Association; David Griffin, the administrator of the Police Association of Ontario; and Brian Adkin, the president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. Welcome, gentlemen.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): If you used it, you'd have one more McCormack on the police force now. There are only four now.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order, the member for St Catharines.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): My colleague the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation has told the House how the government will replace legislated job quotas with a plan to promote fairness in the workplace for all Ontarians.

The Ontario public service will show leadership as an equal opportunity employer by developing and implementing a plan that will ensure that merit is the basis for hiring, promotion and other employment decisions; prevent discrimination and harassment and respond to it in a manner consistent with a zero-tolerance policy; eliminate barriers to equal opportunity; ensure that employees, including those with disabilities, get accommodation on the job, as required by the Human Rights Code; and include measures to ensure effective implementation.

As a first step, Ontario public service job ads have begun carrying the message that the Ontario public service is an equal opportunity employer.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for Oriole is out of order. Hon David Johnson: To make sure our equal opportunity initiatives are cost-effective, we are building on the work already done on removing barriers, providing employment accommodation and preventing discrimination and harassment, and we are seeking advice within the Ontario public service to ensure our equal opportunity

As the details of our plan are finalized, I look forward to communicating them to the House.

plan is both achievable and effective.

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I am very pleased to announce that this government and my ministry, the Ministry of Health, are today reinvesting \$15.5 million to significantly strengthen paramedic emergency

services across Ontario. This money has been saved through administrative efficiencies, reducing waste and eliminating duplication in the health care system.

The measures I am announcing today will provide more paramedic emergency services and, we expect, will save many lives in the province.

I have approved additional paramedic training in London, Kingston and Peterborough as part of our continuing support of a major research project. This training will introduce and evaluate improved paramedic services in up to 21 communities.

Once again, Ontario has taken the lead in evidence-based research, which we expect will determine the impact of advanced paramedic services on the health care system. This project is known as the Ontario Pre-Hospital Advanced Life Support project or OPALS.

We are carefully evaluating these services to make sure they are effective in helping to save lives. Basic paramedic skills include defibrillation. Advanced skills involve such things as providing medication under medical supervision, and intubation to help people breathe easier.

There are currently 121 land paramedics with these advanced skills in Ontario. The OPALS project will increase this number by almost 400, including 24 in London, 18 in Kingston and 12 in Peterborough.

The OPALS program is already under way in Ottawa. Windsor, Sarnia, Niagara Falls and Cambridge are expected to be involved very soon, and other communities are in an earlier stage of this project.

This \$15.5-million reinvestment of health care savings into paramedic emergency services is consistent with the government's stated position of supporting and preserving the delivery of front-line services in this province.

On a final note, I wish to congratulate members of the first graduating class of paramedics in Ottawa-Carleton who are involved in our major research project on paramedic services. They will be honoured during graduation ceremonies this coming Friday, and I hope that while I'm in Ottawa on Friday I'll be able to drop by and bring the congratulations of all the members of this House.

EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Once again on this matter of employment equity, the government has demonstrated that it is ready to stop something but that it has absolutely no constructive plans for action. It is prepared to repeal the employment equity legislation—that's really all it has announced today—but it's doing nothing to ensure that there is an active program to deal with what are very real barriers to truly equal opportunity in the workplace.

The government is talking about a plan, but all it is talking about today is that it is going to develop a plan. I find that a little hard to believe, because during the election campaign they seemed to have a six-point plan for employment equity in the workplace, and I wonder what's happened to the six-point plan. If this government really were prepared to go ahead with an active approach to dealing with barriers to equal opportunity in the

workplace, it had a plan in place. I seriously question that employment equity is going to be a priority for this government at all, at any point in the future.

We have never supported guaranteed access to jobs, we have not believed, ever, in a quota-based approach to employment equity, but I do not believe that you have to repeal this legislation in order to ensure that it is not a quota-based approach to implementation. You can amend the legislation to ensure that the merit principle is still regarded.

The government has said today, shockingly, that employment equity legislation is not needed because, after all, discrimination is against the law. It is not enough to ensure that there is no discrimination in the workplace; that of course is basic to equality. It is surprising that the government will address the problems of the Human Rights Commission only in the longer term, as they say today, because surely discrimination at least must be dealt with actively now.

I call on this government to act now, to strengthen the Human Rights Commission so the commission can ensure that we have discrimination-free workplaces. More than that, I call on them to present a clear plan to address real barriers to equal opportunity. Without this plan, there is nothing. There is no plan, there is no legislation, there is no commitment. There are only empty words.

1400

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I was totally shocked to learn that Minister Snobelen's statement would not include his response to the Ontario College of Teachers' report that was issued this morning. Instead, he has agreed to be a cheerleader to another minister's statement.

I had the opportunity this morning to meet with Margaret Wilson and Frank Clifford regarding this report. Here it is, and every member will receive a copy some time today. It's a very good report; it's an excellent piece of work. The creation of a college of teachers and the changing of teaching into a self-regulating profession affects over 170,000 teachers across the province. I would like to know from the minister when he proposes to bring in legislation on this particular matter.

Our Liberal caucus agrees with the Royal Commission on Learning and its recommendations regarding the creation of a college of teachers. I feel we should focus on the quality of learning, and the best way we can ensure that students are receiving the highest standard of education is to prepare our teachers as well as possible and provide them with significant in-service training throughout their careers. That, to my mind, is the raison d'être of the college, and I think it's a good one.

I will anxiously await any response from this government, and so will 170,000 teachers, I'm sure.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): The minister of Management Board today wants us to consider him an equal opportunity employer. I think what he really is is an equal opportunity unemployer, because as he's handing out the pink slips all over the place, he is at the same time saying, "I'm going to bring forward job ads that tell the public and tell thousands of people who are unem-

ployed out there in the province of Ontario that the government is hiring once again."

Is that what the minister is saying today, that he's going to go out and actively hire new people for the civil service? Or what is it he's saying today? This is nothing but puffery, Mr Minister.

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): The minister's statement today on emergency services, while it may be welcomed by the up to 21 communities that will benefit from paramedic services, certainly is inadequate to all those communities that have been expecting a response to the Graham report on emergency services across this province. Mr Speaker, \$15.5 million is a very small amount compared to the \$132 million that this government has cut, primarily from community services across the province.

Emergency services are important, Minister. We're expecting a response that will deal with the emergency needs of communities large and small across the province. While we all acknowledge that OPALS, the Ontario Pre-Hospital Advanced Life Support project, has been very effective in saving lives, there are more communities that would like to see this project in their community and other communities that want their emergency services intact and available to them.

EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): The statement made today by the various ministers is no less repugnant today than it was then, in statements they made during the election.

The Conservative government, during the election, made it appear that the reason some people were not employed was because some person with a disability was taking it away from them, some aboriginal person was taking it away, some woman or some other visible minority. That's the impression they left with the public.

It's unemployment that causes these problems in society, but they turned that all around and got the worst of people in terms of responding to what they now call the quota system. They know there is no quota system; they know that. I think it's parliamentary enough to say that they are not telling the truth on this matter.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Dufferin-Peel is out of order.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): That should be out of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: The member for Etobicoke West is out of order.

Mr Marchese: What did our bill do? Our bill analysed the workforce, addressed barriers, and said that the workforce should reflect the makeup of the community. That's what it did. It tried to bring some equality in the workplace which we did not have. They talk about merit. If merit were applied, generally speaking, in any workforce—

Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think he said that the government was not telling the

truth. I know by the rules that that is truly out of order. I ask you to ask the member to withdraw.

The Speaker: Take your seat. I did not hear anything out of order. Continue.

Mr Marchese: As I say, if merit were the basis of employment, so many of those people who do not have access to those jobs would have gotten those jobs. So when they say merit should be the principle, I say to them that if merit were applied consistently in the past and now, those people we designated would be getting the jobs. That's what merit is all about. It means that these people will now not have the equality of opportunity they would have had before.

On the issue of guaranteed access, as the Liberal leader said, Bill 79 did not guarantee access; it did not do that either. They're both playing with this issue. It guaranteed the possibility for people to get a job.

Mr Stockwell: The NDP government was lying.

The Speaker: The member for Etobicoke West is out of order.

Mr Marchese: And on the issue of human rights, are they saying they're going to give more money—

Mr Stockwell: They were lying.

The Speaker: Order. I will not warn the member for Etobicoke West once more. Continue.

Mr Marchese: He needs to be a minister, to keep him quiet. Make him a minister.

On the issue of human rights, are they saying they're going to give them more resources, more money, to make it fairer? What are they saying? I was chairing the committee on justice for quite a long time. They were in that committee and I heard them speak a lot about this issue. Are they saying that to make it fairer they're going to give more resources and money? That's about all they're going to do. Are they saying they shall redress systemic barriers in the workplace? They're not saying that. How are they going to bring equality to the workplace? This statement is repugnant today, as it was in the past.

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Mr Speaker, I appreciate the fact that you've allowed the member for Etobicoke West to stay and hear my comments.

I want to respond to the statement made by the Minister of Health, who has, after taking in excess of \$130 million out of the health care system, put about \$15.5 million back into the system.

I understand that the Minister of Health is under enormous pressure, enormous pressure, because when he took the position he was told that his ministry would have no cuts, that the envelope was sealed. So of course he felt very secure when he took the position, feeling that he could be the hero in the Tory cabinet.

As it has turned out since then, however, events haven't quite unfolded that way. Not only has he taken well over \$100 million out of the health care system; he's got a lot more to take out of the health care system. The Minister of Health knows very well that his government cannot deliver the tax cut to middle- and upper-income

people without taking a lot of money out of the health care system.

I do not believe for one minute that the electorate in this province, when they listened to the siren song of a tax cut, believed that tax cut would come out of health care services to people all across the province, because that is where it's going to have to come from. You cannot deliver the tax cut you promised to your friends unless you take money out of the one third of the budget represented by the health care budget. It simply cannot be done, and we'll wait to see the minister squirming in the days and months to come.

ORAL QUESTIONS HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. On Friday, the government released the details of how it planned to break its promise not to cut health care. Since the summer, when the cuts were first announced, this Minister of Health has been telling us not to worry, that they weren't really cutting health care, they were simply making administrative cuts. Now we see clearly that it is indeed health care services, for people who need the services, that are being cut: home oxygen programs, community health centres, long-term care, birthing centres and of course hospitals.

The minister has tried to camouflage the cuts, and certainly to camouflage the cuts to hospitals is something he calls cash management. What he is really doing is offloading about \$20 million in costs to the hospitals themselves, yet this minister wants everyone to believe this is somehow not going to affect hospital services.

Yesterday in this House the minister said that none of the cuts will affect front-line services. I ask this minister today, how can you guarantee that? How can you guarantee that more people will not have to wait for the health care services they need because of your cuts?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I certainly answered this question in full yesterday when the member for York South asked the question. I don't know which one of the administrative savings you want me to explain, but they're all quite explainable.

1410

For example, the home oxygen administrative savings: I don't understand the motive or where the Liberal Party comes from on this. I can certainly understand, with the bookkeeping the NDP did in the past, how they misunderstand this.

You didn't spend \$8 million in that program last year that was projected to be spent, so it is pure savings. I don't intend to spend it this year, so it is clearly an administrative saving based on the criteria the previous government brought in. I don't know how you explain that.

In spite of all the best efforts of the bureaucrats to spend the \$8 million, they couldn't. So it shows up in the books as an overpayment, as an item that you couldn't possibly spend if you tried, and we're taking that and reinvesting it in other priority areas within the Ministry of Health, one of which I just announced in this House.

Mrs McLeod: I simply can't consider it an administrative cut when reducing the funding for the home oxygen program means that people will be discouraged from using liquid oxygen, which basically means that their mobility will be reduced and their illness will become more crippling than it already is.

I can't accept that it's an administrative cut only that this government makes when they simply wash their hands of cuts to hospitals and assume the hospitals will find a way of guaranteeing that front-line services will be protected. This minister's taking no responsibility for that at all.

Besides that, the Common Sense Revolution never said, "There'll be no cuts to health care funding by a Harris government except for those cuts we cleverly refer to as administrative cuts." It says, "No cuts to health care." Now you're saying that you're not really cutting because you're going to reallocate the money, and again the minister has just said that in his response.

We've seen the cuts, we've seen the details of them and now we think we should see the details of the reallocation that this minister keeps saying he's going to make. If you can detail the cuts, you should be able to detail where you're going to reinvest the dollars. I challenge you today to provide all the details of your reallocation plan. Will you give us a detailed listing of where you are going to reinvest the dollars you are cutting from health care?

Hon Mr Wilson: I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition. Unlike previous governments, we think it makes good sense, and in fact common sense, to identify those savings first, to make sure you have them in hand, before you go out making reinvestment announcements.

We have to date made two reinvestment announcements in this Legislature: One was \$25 million of administrative savings reinvested into dialysis services in this province; today I announced \$15.5 million to expand level 2 paramedic services in up to 21 communities across this province.

The throne speech talked about cancer care investments that we will have to make; we've talked about a vaccination or immunization program that we're currently developing for school-age children across this province which will be a major public health initiative in this province; and the throne speech outlined other initiatives that we are currently planning.

We are methodically going through all of the programs we deliver in the ministry, trying to prioritize. The previous government left us some very serious gaps in services. We're all aware of the waiting lists for cardiac services in this province, and that's another area that the throne speech said we will be reinvesting. So in the fullness of time all members will be aware of how and where we're reinvesting our health care dollars.

Mrs McLeod: The minister says very smoothly that they think it makes sense to find the savings first. That means one thing and one thing only, and that is cuts now from a government that said there would be no cuts to health care. Until this minister actually shows us where

these dollars are going to be reinvested, where the services are that are going to benefit people, all we have is empty words and we have cuts, because we see the cuts right now; we see the services being cut right now.

I suggest that it is just not good enough to tell people that we are going to make the cuts now and replace the dollars some time maybe four years down the road, because people need the health care now. They cannot wait for that care till some time four years from now.

Minister, I'll ask you again quite simply: Will you guarantee that the budget for health care spending will stand at last year's level of \$17.8 billion when your government presents its first budget, and will it stand at \$17.8 billion in the next budget and the next budget thereafter?

Hon Mr Wilson: I've been around this track before with the honourable member and made it clear that the Common Sense Revolution, the commitment to the people of Ontario, was a \$17.4-billion health care budget to be sealed over the term of the government's time in office. That's the commitment we are living up to. We will be finding duplication, we will be finding waste and fraud and efficiencies within that envelope and reinvesting within that envelope, as I've described.

That's the commitment we made to the people of Ontario, that's the measure by which they will look to us prior to the next election and we are fully meeting that commitment. Anything that you've seen in the media in the last few days—I can assure the member that there are no cuts to front-line health services in this province. In fact, what we've seen is administrative savings directed to some very, very positive and helpful programs, and I don't know how you could possibly complain about the approach we're taking.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW BOARD

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Is the minister of social services aware that two weeks ago the chairperson of the Social Assistance Review Board, a certain Maureen Adams, wrote to members of the Social Assistance Review Board saying, on that day, September 25, 1995, that there would be significant reductions to the budget and the membership of the Social Assistance Review Board because of the fiscal situation in which the province of Ontario now finds itself?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): With respect to the honourable member's question, I'm not accountable for what the chair of the Social Assistance Review Board says or does not say without any type of authority from the ministry.

Mr Conway: In Ms Adams's letter of September 25, 1995, 16 days ago, she writes in part: "As you know, as part of the overall downsizing of government, the minister advised this board that our budget would be significantly reduced. As a result, there will be reductions in staff and board member positions."

Given that clear advice and direction from Ms Adams, the chairperson of the Ontario Social Assistance Review Board, on September 25, 1995, how, Minister, is it

possible that scarcely 10 days later, four new vice-chairs were appointed to that selfsame board, bringing the board complement above its normal level?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: First of all, I must add that these were vacancies which were there to be filled. They are not above any complement.

I will say this, though: Our ministry, as well as all other members of this government, have put the challenge to our ministries to find efficiencies in the ministries, more efficient ways, and to be more innovative in the way we do things. Certainly it is not out of order for us to look for all our agencies to try to be more efficient, to do more with less.

Mr Conway: For the next number of weeks, your Social Assistance Review Board will be above complement. Now, given what we all know to be the case facing the government, and given your stated aims as expressed in the chairperson's letter about downsizing, how is it possible that on this day when we celebrate, according to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, the merit principle, you've not only appointed a twice-defeated provincial Tory candidate, the famous and flamboyant and often extreme Evelyn Dodds, to this position, but you have also appointed a certain Dan MacDonald, a well-known Mulroney organizer, to the same board?

Minister, are you and your friend Mike Harris telling Ontario that we now have a two-tiered welfare program: a pared-down offering to the poor and the needy, and a deluxe program to the friends of Brian Mulroney and Mike Harris?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm sure that the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The member for Hamilton East is continuously out of order. I will not warn him again.

1420

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Mr Speaker, I'm sure I wouldn't be surprised that we haven't got much support from the member for what we're trying to do to try to make things more efficient.

But I must say this: If we look at the prior government, what had happened during that time, surely the members of the third party know this—because the SARB was operating under their auspices at the time—the Social Assistance Review Board was only sitting two days a week. That's an excellent question, because this is how the prior government was operating things; people were working two days a week. Now, to me, that's not efficient, and what we're trying to do right now is make sure that people do things more efficiently. Two days a week is not efficient.

Secondly, I have to tell you this: There were vacancies on the board. These vacancies were filled at the prerogative of the Premier, on my advice, and I'm pleased to inform you that these vacancies were filled by four very competent people. These appointments were done on the basis of principles, not politics. We wanted individuals who would take a tough stand on welfare and welfare fraud.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. New question, the member for Windsor-Riverside.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I have a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The minister has just said that there were four vacancies and those vacancies had to be filled. Can the minister tell the House, if that's the case, why is it that the four people were let go on September 25, because as the chair of the Social Assistance Review Board says in the memo, their appointments were not being renewed because of budget cuts? Why were those four people let go? What was wrong with these four people? They had served on the Social Assistance Review Board and they were let go simply because the minister told the Chair that the budget was being cut. What changed between September 25 and the day that you decided to appoint Tory hacks to the Social Assistance Review Board?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm afraid that the message isn't getting across here. The message that we have is: The challenge in government right now is to do things more efficiently, to do more for less.

I'm sorry, it doesn't take much courage for someone to sign a blank cheque all the time. It takes courage to try to correct the system.

I'll tell you something: We need individuals on the Social Assistance Review Board who will take tough stands on welfare fraud. It's difficult for me to understand how anyone could possibly say that any fraud is good fraud. Any incidence of fraud takes money away from people who truly need it.

Mr Cooke: I think now we've got to the heart of what the government has done, when the minister uses language like "courage...to correct the system," or "tough" decisions. I'm glad the minister said in answer to the question from the Liberal Party that he takes responsibility for this appointment.

I'd like to ask the minister if, in making the recommendation to cabinet, he looked into some of the positions that Evelyn Dodds has taken.

Let me just read a couple of quotes from the Thunder Bay paper, October 27, 1993: "The plain fact is, some of us don't want to pay \$2,500 for a social service funeral," or—this one was referred to—"The right of the public to protect its money must outweigh the right of individual privacy," or "Single mothers living in subsidized housing who allow their boyfriends or ex-husbands to move in—this is tantamount to a subsidized bordello."

I'd like to ask the minister: As Minister of Community and Social Services, did he approve this appointment? Did he review the positions that this person takes and has taken in the past, and how could he appoint somebody like this to the Social Assistance Review Board? You should be ashamed.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I did say before, these appointments were made with the prerogative of the Premier on my advice, so clearly I was involved in the decision-making. There's no question about that.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The individual at hand will have to answer to any alleged statements that have or have not been made. But I must say that, of the four individuals who were appointed, the one whom the honourable member was speaking about has a track record of leading efforts to crack down on welfare fraud. Two individuals have experience on the immigrant refugee board and the other person is a lecturer and has experience with human resources. These people were appointed for their abilities and their professional abilities.

Mr Cooke: The minister may not be aware of the fact that in 1985 there was a total reform of appointments to the Social Assistance Review Board. In fact, under the previous Tory government it was known basically as the senate for defeated MPPs and defeated candidates.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): We're obviously returning to that.

Mr Cooke: Now we're going back to that; that's very clear. I'd like to ask the minister a very simple question. The chair today is quoted in the Toronto Star as saying that the first she heard about these appointments was when the press release was put out. Could the minister spell out for the members of the assembly and for the public, what is the process to be appointed to the Social Assistance Review Board?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The merit to be appointed to any board in this government is to be competent and have professional qualifications.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a question for the Minister of—I almost said "Consumer and Commercial Relations," but I mean Community and Social Services. Minister, you have consistently stated that people on social assistance whose benefits have been cut will be able to earn back the difference.

I'd like to know today what he has to say to the about 100,000 people who are already working under STEP and are receiving benefits. Their incomes, as he well knows, have been substantially cut. Even though they are doing everything the minister says they should do to help themselves get off the system, everything that's stated in this document, the Common Sense Revolution, on page 9, what is the minister saying today to those people?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): Clearly, whenever I've referred to the earn-back provision, I've always referred to being able to earn back the difference between the old rate and the new rate—old basic rate, new basic rate. That's what we've been talking about.

This is a program which encourages people to break that cycle of dependency. That's what's important about the earn-back provision. That's why we have it in place.

Ms Churley: I don't think the minister himself understands exactly what he is doing over there. That is not the way it's working.

I have another question for the minister: Let me give you a very concrete example of the kind of ludicrous and ridiculous situation your welfare cuts have created. Margaret, who is a real person, is a participant in a sixmonth training program for single mothers receiving assistance. She gets a training allowance; she also gets child support. Before the cuts, she was getting a general welfare top-up of \$177 a month. But with the cut, she is no longer eligible for general welfare because her other income is too great and therefore she is no longer eligible to be in the training program. So, Minister, with one month left for her in the training program, she will probably have to leave, which means she no longer gets a training allowance and she will have to reapply for welfare.

Minister, what do you have to say to Margaret today about the situation you have put her in?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: First of all, I find it difficult to understand how the honourable member can take exception to a program that will encourage initiative and create opportunities and get people to break the cycle of dependency. Certainly we have to take a fresh approach to this.

Once again, it's very easy, and it has been easy for the last 10 years, to write blank cheques. Unfortunately, one day these cheques are going to amount to something and you're going to have to pay for them, and that day has come. This government at least has the courage right now to try to fix the system.

1430

Ms Churley: I truly don't believe I just heard what the minister said. He is forcing this woman back on to welfare. Don't you understand? This is the very thing that you said in your Common Sense Revolution, you all said over there, that you wanted to give people a hand up and help them get off the system.

This woman—and may I add there are others: Kathy lost more than \$300 a month; Yvonne lost \$200; Jane lost almost \$400; Becky and her husband who work full-time at minimum wage can barely pay their rent and feed their children. These people are doing what you asked them to do: get off the system with our help. That's what you said you would do.

I advise the minister to have a look at the STEP program and see how it works. What is he going to tell these people about their future? They have no future if he doesn't right away get together with his officials. He simply must look into this situation and help those people like Margaret who are being forced back into the welfare system against their wishes.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I would invite the honourable member to try to broaden her perspective in this matter. It's important for us to keep in mind the working poor of this province who receive no help from the government as they go about their lives. Unless we correct this system, there will be no help for anybody. The working poor in this province deserve our support as well.

MEDIA PASSES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Attorney General. He may recall, as you may, Mr Speaker, that Richard Brennan, the president of the press gallery, and Jim Coyle of the press gallery were investigated by the police, supposedly at the behest of a previous government, and that has still not been settled, whether they've been cleared or not.

But it brought to mind a matter which is troubling to

me and may be troubling to the Attorney General, and that was a report which indicated the following:

"Metro police will no longer issue media passes giving reporters access to accident and crime scenes unless the force is authorized to do formal criminal checks.... Since September 29, Metro police have required any media member asking for a pass to fill out a form that includes a waiver allowing the police to check on whether the reporter has a criminal record," and further, "Media members must also give police their home address...home phone number and driver's licence number."

Is the minister concerned that this requirement is perhaps an invasion of privacy—and I know he has great concerns in this area, the minister does—and possibly an attempt to control what the media prints about stories?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I have not spoken to the police about this. Of course it's an issue that we all can be concerned about in this place, where we value the issue of freedom of speech and freedom of expression as we do. It is not a matter that has been brought to my attention, nor is it a matter that is necessarily within my purview, and the member for St Catharines understands that. Certainly it's a matter that I appreciate his bringing to my attention. I did read the media account of it, and it's something that I will inquire into.

Mr Bradley: I believe that the individuals in the news media who cover the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of the province of Ontario do not have to go through such a check, and many of them are concerned about the ramifications of this policy. Some believe that the police could use the personal information against reporters who file stories unflattering to the force, others believe that it smacks of an attempt to control media coverage, and yet others say they cannot understand why the police need such personal information if the passes do not cover any special rights or privileges. Some have said that it strikes them as an attempt to get information that they could use for reasons other than to grant access to crime scenes.

As a person who is very concerned about privacy, freedom of the press, concerned about the judicial system as a whole—and I recognize it's more in the purview of the Solicitor General—would you undertake today to consult with the Solicitor General and with the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force to have them review this policy with a view to eliminating some of the personal information which is required before someone can cover a story?

Hon Mr Harnick: I will make those inquiries that the member requests. The other thing that I'd point out—and the member is very fair when he asks the question. He says that someone covering the events that the Premier or the Prime Minister would be at doesn't have to go through that check. But the other side of the coin is that there are people investigating criminal issues, criminal matters, and it's a very different kind of reporting, I suppose. It's a very different atmosphere and a very different subject matter than when you're covering a story based on a speech that a Premier or Prime Minister makes. But I will undertake to make that inquiry, and I will get back to the member.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW BOARD

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I'd like to go back to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I'd like to ask the minister again specifically what the process is for appointments to the Social Assistance Review Board. The minister will know that in 1985 a new process was adopted whereby the chair of the Social Assistance Review Board and others were involved in the process and that the appointments were nonpartisan appointments based on the needs of the Social Assistance Review Board and the capability to sit on that board. In this particular case it is very clear that the chair was not involved at all. In fact the only way that she found out was when you put out a press release announcing the appointments. My question is very simple: What is the process for appointments to the Social Assistance Review Board?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): It's very interesting, and I guess very ironic, to hear the honourable member speaking about non-partisan appointments to the Social Assistance Review Board. Very clearly, and once again, the process and the qualifications for people: We pick the best people available who apply. We pick them on the basis of their knowledge of the issues and their professionalism.

Mr Cooke: If those are the criteria, I'd like to know how Evelyn Dodds fits into those criteria other than the fact that she is absolutely determined, as this government is, to dump on the poor of this province. That is absolutely the agenda of this government and why Evelyn Dodds has been appointed to the Social Assistance Review Board. Why don't you be up front and tell people?

I'd like to ask the minister for an absolute commitment that the appointment of Evelyn Dodds—

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): A Tory.

Mr Cooke: —a Tory; the appointment of Pauline Browes, a former MP from 1984 to 1993, now vice-chair of the Environmental Assessment Board; David Nash, who's the Tory hack from London who's been put on the Ontario Casino Corp, that all of the appointments that have been made by your government since June 8 will be referred to the ABCs committee for review, even before the committee has been set up.

1440

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): Oh, tell him to get a grip.

Mr Cooke: Will you make that commitment to the Legislature today?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Clearly the honourable member is asking about appointments—

Mr Stockwell: Oh, tell him to get a grip and take Agnew and Reville and all you guys with him.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The minister take his seat, please.

I would ask the member for Etobicoke West to leave the chamber.

Mr Stockwell left the chamber.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Clearly I can't comment on any appointee other than someone who has been appointed

under the auspices of our ministry. I will say a word or two about the individual in question, because her qualifications somehow are being questioned. This particular candidate for the position had been a councillor in Thunder Bay. Many councillors and many people in municipal government have experience in dealing with welfare and welfare issues.

Clearly, once again, the difficulty we've had now is that the welfare rolls have swollen about 300% over the last 10 years. Clearly there's a need for us to crack down on fraud. I can't believe that somehow the principle of cracking down on fraud is considered by some as being bad.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): This is not a judicial body any more.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Crackdown on kids.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Lake Nipigon and the member for Algoma, I will not warn you once more.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): Mr Speaker, I would like to, as many members have already done, congratulate you on your election as Speaker. I wish you well as you use great wisdom, understanding and fairness in this House.

My question is directed to my colleague the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Last week the Minister of Labour introduced Bill 7, which repeals the NDP government's Bill 91, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act.

As the minister knows, my riding involves the south section of St Catharines and all of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Niagara-on-the-Lake consists of some of the most prestigious farms in the province, and indeed in all of Canada. As we all know, the horticulture and agriculture sections are extremely sensitive to time and climate conditions as they directly affect production. My question to the minister is, what impact will the repeal of Bill 91 have on the Niagara agricultural industry?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I want to thank the honourable member for St Catharines-Brock for his question, reflecting many of the statements that were made during our table talks several weeks ago. What will occur with the repeal of the labour law, Bill 40, and its companion, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act, Bill 91?

It will bring harmony back to rural Ontario. It will guarantee that when the tender fruit crops are ready for harvest, they will be harvested. It will guarantee that there is communication between the employer and the employee, as opposed to having a private body come in and dictate to both of them. It will bring harmony back into the agricultural relations and all of those very important things to very, very sensitive crops which must be harvested when they are ready.

Mr Froese: I would ask the minister, does he think it will be a net benefit to the family farm in the Niagara region?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Quite obviously, it will be a positive not only to farms in the Niagara area but to farms across the province of Ontario. That's what the agricultural community wants, and we are providing what they need and want.

AIR QUALITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South): My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. The city of Toronto has one of the worst air quality problems in Canada, and the people of Toronto want to clean up their air by passing a bylaw controlling the idling of vehicles in their city. Madam Minister, your colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs has now told the people of Toronto that he will not permit them to pass their clean air bylaw. What I want to know is, as our province's advocate for environmental concerns in cabinet, our chief advocate for clean air, how could you have possibly agreed to this?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. That particular issue was in fact a municipal request for a bylaw change and was most appropriately directed, and certainly the Minister of Municipal Affairs spoke to it at the time. There are a number of initiatives that the Ministry of Environment and Energy is undertaking and work ongoing to deal with better air quality for Ontario.

Mr McGuinty: That answer confirms the deepest and darkest suspicions we have over here. We have a Minister of Environment and Energy but in name only. She has the trappings of the ministry. She has the car. She's got the parliamentary assistant. She's got the offices. But it's quite apparent that at the cabinet table there is nobody there fighting for environmental concerns, there's nobody there fighting for clean water and there's nobody there fighting for clean air. My question is quite simply: If the Minister of Environment and Energy is not sitting at the cabinet table fighting for environmental concerns, who is?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I would like to take this opportunity to assure the member and all members of this House that the Minister of Environment and Energy is very much committed to the environmental protection of this province, be it land, air or water.

This ministry is working on a number of initiatives, not only this ministry alone but in coordination with the Ministry of Transportation and with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We are regulating emissions from gasoline fumes, working with the dry cleaners of this province in the safe handling of dry cleaning fluids, and we are presently involved in a joint project such as vehicle emissions for the province of Ontario towards the betterment of air emissions in this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The member for Algoma.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I might be tempted to go to that minister and ask her what she has done since the change of government, since all of the ones she mentioned were previous government initiatives.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Instead I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. I've searched through this document and also through the document that had the picture of your colleague from London on the front of it and I haven't been able to see any reference to collective bargaining reform. So perhaps the minister could clarify for the House: Do you intend to bring in legislation or regulatory change that would require teachers in this province to bargain collectively on a province-wide basis?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): In answer to the honourable member's question, I have no intention of bringing that legislation forward—today.

Mr Wildman: I'm sure all of us in this House find that very reassuring. Could the minister expand a little and explain if he intends to bring it in some time in the future?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Mr Speaker, it just occurred to me that I've been somewhat negligent in the past and haven't yet congratulated you for being elected as Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to do so.

In answer to the honourable member's question, it's my intention and the intention of this government to make sure that we have relationships with the bargaining units in the teachers' federations across this province that'll make sure that our children in this province get the proper quality of education that they need and deserve, and we undertake to take every action towards that ultimate goal.

1450

COURT FACILITIES

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): Mr Speaker, I stand before you to stand behind you and congratulate you.

My question is to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet. Recently, there have been suggestions that the \$772 million in expenditure reductions that you announced last Friday spells the end of the courthouse program. Brampton's courthouse budget is losing \$1.5 million in 1995-96. Can the minister please clarify the status of the courthouse program for the House today?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I would like to clarify that the reductions—the capital reductions, the operating reductions—of \$772 million have not impacted, have not affected, the five courthouses that are under review at the present time in the province of Ontario, and the planning is carrying on as normal in all five. I can say that the five involved include Brampton, Hamilton, Windsor, Durham and Cornwall.

I can understand the member for Brampton North expressing this in the nature of a question, because there has been some concern from those communities, not only because of the reductions but because in many cases these courthouses have been in the planning stage or in the construction stage for many, many years. Many people are expressing concern that the previous government in particular was dragging its heels and people

could not get an answer with regard to the progress of the courthouses.

Mr Spina: Can the minister please assure the House, then, that the government is studying all the options with regard to the courthouse programs and we're not singling out any community in the province?

Hon David Johnson: The member for Brampton North has spoken today and in the past most firmly on behalf of his constituency and the courthouse in Brampton. All five courthouses are being reviewed at present by the Attorney General. The Attorney General is looking fairly at the five courthouses.

The member will realize that because this government, when it took office, was left with a forecasted deficit of \$10.6 billion, all options had to be looked at in terms of reducing expenditures in the province of Ontario. That sort of deficit is not sustainable, and that's the source of many of the problems that are being debated here today.

The courthouses are being looked at. All expenditures of the province of Ontario are being looked at. I expect that review to be complete within about a month. I expect Management Board to be looking at all options with regard to the courthouses, and I hope we'll be able to satisfy the people of Brampton North and the other people of the province of Ontario.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): My question was for the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. I see he's not here, even though it was indicated he'd be here. I'll direct it to the Minister of Labour, who's going to make all the real answers anyway.

Earlier this month, your government announced that WCB assessments would be frozen. In the Common Sense Revolution, on page 15, you stated quite unequivocally that those premiums would be cut by 5%. Is it still your government's intention to cut those assessments by 5%? If so, when will that be implemented and how will it be implemented?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): Certainly it is our intention to reduce the assessment rates, as we indicated in the Common Sense Revolution. That will be part of the medium-term reform plan that is being undertaken by the honourable member responsible for workers' compensation reform.

Mr Duncan: Short term, medium term? Let's take, for example, hospitals, rate group 853. They were expecting a 5% decrease already and had adjusted their budgets to accommodate for that. I spoke to officials today from the Ontario Hospital Association and they indicated to me that your decision to freeze assessments is going to cost them millions of dollars in the short term, irrespective of the medium term.

Does neither one of the ministers realize that your actions to date are not only not helping employers but are penalizing employers? They're penalizing good employers at the expense of bad employers who haven't addressed serious problems with health and safety.

Will you give us your assurance today that those employers who have made a consistent and honest effort

at reducing workplace health and safety incidents will in fact be the largest beneficiaries of cuts in assessment rates and not simply pay the price for those employers who haven't?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member is obviously aware that we have in this province an unfunded liability of \$11.4 billion. This has been of enormous concern to people throughout the province, both employers and the employees and injured workers. Obviously, the first issue we need to address is to ensure that we eliminate the unfunded liability and are able to ensure that injured workers do receive the benefits they are entitled to, so we are taking a look at the overall financial picture of the WCB. I'm sure you would agree that with that approach you would get the complete picture. Once you have the complete financial picture and you determine how you can ensure that benefits will always be available for injured workers, then you determine how you can deal with the reduction in the assessment rates, you take a look at the target rates. You do that after you have taken a look at the overall context.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question. The member for Cochrane South.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): That was an awful condescending answer to the question.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. On July 25, you, as the Minister of Housing—what's left of it—along with the Premier of this province, cancelled 385 housing projects. At the same time, you put out a press release and said 113 of those construction projects would be going ahead because of various stages of commitment. Some of them were further ahead than others. Within the 113, there were 26 for supportive housing projects.

Members of this assembly all know, but for those people watching at home, supportive housing projects are designed to support the needs of people coming out of institutions who no longer have a place there because there's been a policy for some years of depopulating those institutions. We would build these supportive housing projects and allow those people to move into them and have a place to live in our community.

My question to you is a very simple one. Are you still committed to go ahead with those 26 housing projects that were designated for the supportive housing needs of the people of Ontario?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): We've stated quite clearly that it's the intention of this government to get out of the non-profit housing business and get out of the co-op housing business. We believe we should put our support behind providing shelter allowances to people who need it and not throwing it into bricks and mortar.

I can tell you, the thing with "non-profit" is that it's the biggest misnomer I've ever heard. Nobody in the non-profit business doesn't make a profit.

Mr Bisson: What amazes me in this House is how ministers of the crown can stand up and absolutely refuse to answer questions. This period is called question period.

We ask the questions; you give an answer. That's the idea.

I'm going to ask the Minister of Housing again, very specifically—this is very clear, this is very easy—there are 26 projects which your government said, after you axed 385—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Willowdale is out of order.

Mr Bisson: —would be going ahead and you would be building those projects to support the needs of the people within the disabled community. Your own press release said, if you would at least read your press releases, "Of the 26 supportive housing projects, there are 13 that did not have final commitment but were tied to the closing of institutions or dedicated to people who otherwise require long-term care within those projects."

The question is very simple: Are you going to live up to your commitment? Will these units be built? Will those people coming out of institutions have a place to live or will they be on the street?

Hon Mr Leach: I can tell you that this government intends to live up to all its commitments, every commitment it's made, far unlike the previous government, but we do strongly believe that the interest should be put where the needs are. We intend to develop a shelter allowance program that will provide subsidies to those individuals in the province of Ontario who need them, including the disabled and the elderly.

There are a number of projects going ahead that will support people who are coming out of institutions, and we intend to keep that commitment as well. Anything this government has said about non-profit housing, we intend to carry out on non-profit housing.

ADVOCACY AND GUARDIANSHIP LEGISLATION

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West): I would like to direct my question, if I could, to the Attorney General. I'm aware that this government will be introducing legislation to amend the Substitute Decisions Act. Could the minister please inform this House of the reasons for these amendments?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Mississauga West for the question. The current legislation allows the government too much power for unnecessary intrusion into people's lives and financial matters. This government wants to restore privacy and protection to the individual while still allowing the transfer of powers of attorney to trusted people. We will be tightening up the legislation to ensure that an individual's choice of who will look after their affairs is guaranteed. We want to ensure that individuals decide who will look after their affairs.

Mr Sampson: Many of the constituents in Mississauga West and across Ontario have expressed concern that, under the current legislation, bureaucrats could be running their affairs. In this amendment, will the minister address this concern?

Hon Mr Harnick: We will be addressing that concern. We intend to introduce amendments to the Substitute Decisions Act which are intended to streamline procedures for appointing substitute decision-makers and reducing hurdles for family members, and—I say this very categorically—to make the public trustee the last resort to take over the estates and management for individuals who have powers of attorney.

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I have a question to the Minister of Transportation. I wonder if you could help me, Minister. I'm trying to figure this out. Last week, you again threatened to take over the TTC and put it under the province's wing. You second-guessed them about the cuts they were making. You accused them of copping out because they were trying to make cuts to meet the cuts you've made. In the same breath, when you're advising the TTC on what to do and what not to do, you're saying: "Well, I don't know anything about your operation. I'm not even privy to your books." You're proclaiming your ignorance on one hand, yet you're recommending solutions for public transit in Metro. On what basis do you come up with these firm, firm ideas about public transportation when you're proclaiming your own ignorance?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): The TTC is responsible for managing its own house; however, I did ask the TTC to look at its house and see if it was in order. That was the intent of this government, to see if we could help that particular house help itself get in order.

Mr Colle: You categorically stated that they were making the wrong decisions, and you were saying that the province would now create this mega-agency to take over public transport.

I ask you again, how are you so sure that this new mega-agency which you're going to head is going to put riders back on the TTC, is going to bring back Wheel-Trans customers? How is it going to make transit better by creating a bigger agency under the provincial government? How are you so sure of this when you again say you know nothing about the TTC? You haven't even looked at their books—which, by the way, are open to the public. You can either walk down the street to Metro Hall or up the street to Yonge Street. You can look at their books.

Hon Mr Palladini: As everyone knows, this particular government is trying to find ways we can get our transportation system integrated to a point that it will become sufficient and affordable for every Ontarian. So at this particular time I would like to tell the member that we have no immediate plans to take over the TTC.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Mr Minister, with respect, I feel that your briefing notes will refer to the 3,000 bridges over which you have jurisdictional capacity, a responsibility indeed, and 23,000 kilometres of highways in the province of Ontario. Add to it 136,000 kilometres of road and the reality that winter will soon be upon us in northwestern Ontario, our special part of Ontario, where we measure distance on a different scale.

Over the years the residents of Lake Nipigon and northwestern Ontario have become accustomed to and felt secure that winter maintenance was never in jeopardy. Will you give us the assurance that at least the very same money will be spent in northwestern Ontario for winter maintenance as was the case in previous years? Yes or no, Minister?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I would like to assure the honourable member, my predecessor in the Ministry of Transportation, that this government is committed to maintaining the safest highways and it is a priority of this government to do exactly just that.

Mr Pouliot: Mr Speaker, you will allow me to thank the minister for not yet having learned to kill the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

M. Pouliot: Monsieur le Président, est-ce qu'on peut avoir quand même un peu de sérieux? This is a very serious question. We're talking about the necessity to go to work, the necessity to attend much-needed medical appointments. We're talking about hundreds of kilometres that have to be travelled quite often on a monthly basis, not a situation with a sophisticated public transit system—simply put, no alternative.

You're perhaps concerned, Minister, with the conditions of the soft shoulders where you live. We are concerned with the conditions between the soft shoulders where we live, and we ask you to make the commitment now. You could be a hero by saying, "Yes, we will spend the same money."

Hon Mr Palladini: The Ministry of Transportation will continue to clear the highways as soon as possible. I want to assure the member that this ministry is also committed to doing better for less. We will monitor the road conditions and make the changes necessary when it's needed. But this government is committed to maintaining our highways at a safety regulation standard that's just as good as any other province across the country.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): A point of information, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: There's no point of information. 1510

PETITIONS

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I have a number of petitions here that have come in the last three or four months since the House wasn't sitting. There are hundreds of names on this petition, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 81% of all driving fatalities are alcohol related;

"Whereas 59% (or 18,000) of the 30,000 total convictions for drunk driving in 1992 involved repeat offenders;

"Whereas the Drinking and Driving in Ontario Statisti-

cal Yearbook released by the Ministry of Attorney General's Drinking/Driving Countermeasures Office confirmed that drunk driving is on the rise;

"Whereas drunk driving is the number one killer of young people;

"Whereas the existing measures and penalties have failed to deter chronic drunk drivers from reoffending;

"Whereas driving is a privilege, not a right, and chronic drunk drivers have failed to take their driving responsibilities seriously;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact Margaret Marland's private Bill 195, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act, or similar legislation prior to the recess of the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 1994."

I will sign this petition.

BICYCLE SAFETY

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I have with me a petition, signed by 2,177 people from Chatham-Kent, against the mandatory requirement for individuals to wear a helmet while riding a bicycle.

"Whereas we, the undersigned, support the voluntary use of bicycle helmets promoted as part of a comprehensive bicycle safety program; and

"Whereas we, the undersigned, oppose the province's plan to mandate the use of bicycle helmets as being an excessive restriction of personal rights to choose for ourselves, as guaranteed under the Constitution;

"We respectfully submit this petition for your consideration."

I have added my signature to this petition.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

JOB QUOTAS REPEAL ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995

ABROGEANT LE CONTINGENTEMENT EN MATIÈRE D'EMPLOI

Ms Mushinski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to repeal job quotas and to restore merit-based employment practices in Ontario / Projet de loi 8, Loi abrogeant le contingentement en matière d'emploi et rétablissant en Ontario les pratiques d'emploi fondées sur le mérite.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

CANADIAN NIAGARA POWER COMPANY, LIMITED ACT, 1995

Mr Hudak moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr12, An Act respecting Canadian Niagara Power Company, Limited.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

CITY OF MISSISSAUGA ACT, 1995

Mr Sampson moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr37, An Act respecting the City of Mississauga.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Mr Speaker, I believe that we have the consent of the House to defer any division, if required today on the opposition day motion by Mrs McLeod, until Monday next. It would be taken immediately after the deferred divisions on the throne speech debate.

The Speaker: Do we have the unanimous consent of the House to do that? Agreed.

OPPOSITION DAY

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs McLeod moved opposition day motion number 1: Whereas the Common Sense Revolution states that a Conservative government "will not cut health care"; and

Whereas, during the 1995 election campaign, the Conservatives clearly promised to defend the health care system by protecting ministry funding, stating in a campaign backgrounder, "there will be no cuts to health care funding by a Harris government," and calling this their first, and most important commitment; and

Whereas the Premier repeated this promise throughout the campaign; and

Whereas the public accounts for 1994-95 show the Ministry of Health budget at \$17.8 billion; and

Whereas the Conservative government has said that it is committed to funding health care only to the level of \$17.4 billion; and

Whereas this represents a cut to the health care budget of more than \$400 million; and

Whereas the Conservative government has already cut \$132 million from the budget of the Ministry of Health when, on July 21, 1995, the Finance minister announced a series of spending cuts designed to reduce the deficit; and

Whereas the Common Sense Revolution clearly states "every dollar we save by cutting overhead or by bringing in the best new management techniques and thinking will be reinvested in health care to improve services to patients"; and

Whereas the \$132 million in funding has gone directly to reduce the deficit and therefore cannot be reallocated within the health care system; and

Whereas this government is considering introducing user fees to the Ontario drug benefit program; and

Whereas there have been suggestions that hospitals will face a reduction in funding from this government when it cuts its support to all transfer partners next year; and

Whereas, according to media reports on the premiers' conference in St. John's, the Premier of Ontario "wouldn't rule out user fees"; and

Whereas the Premier has stated that "a signal has gone out to the (Health) ministry that there are no sacred cows," suggesting that further cuts may be planned to health care funding; and

Whereas the recent actions taken by this government contradict election promises and have confused a concerned public still coping with the negative impact of the previous NDP government's mismanagement of the Ministry of Health; and

Whereas the NDP government was the first government in the history of the province of Ontario to reduce the budget of the Ministry of Health in real dollars; and

Whereas the NDP government inflicted chaos upon the health care system with the introduction of the social contract, which resulted in a deterioration in the quality of care provided in Ontario; and

Whereas the NDP government attempted to introduce user fees to the Ontario drug benefit program and then removed more than 230 drugs from the Ontario drug benefit program without first consulting with those affected by this change; and

Whereas the NDP government reneged on its funding promises for hospitals in the province of Ontario and reduced the budgets of provincial psychiatric hospitals; and

Whereas, faced with the detrimental effects of the NDP government's assault on the health care system and the threats being made by this Conservative government to continue the attack through cuts in funding and the introduction of user fees, the province requires real leadership for the protection of the health care system and a commitment to maintain stable funding for the Health ministry at \$17.8 billion;

Therefore, this House calls on the Minister of Health to restore the \$132 million that was cut on July 21, 1995, in order to maintain the promise made by this government to protect health care funding and not cut health care; to reaffirm this government's commitment to no new user fees; and to ensure that the health care budget will stand at \$17.8 billion for every day of the life of this government.

1520

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Quite clearly, there were many issues of concern that we could have addressed on this first opposition day of this session of this Parliament.

There is a great deal that this new government has already done in its first four months that sets a direction for this province, a direction on social policy in particular, that none of us in our caucus wants to see and that I believe increasing numbers of people across this province are concerned about.

We have chosen to focus this opposition day on health care for a number of reasons: firstly, because the preservation of a universal quality health care system has always been a priority for Liberals, and we as Liberals will challenge any attack on the basic principles of that system; secondly, because maintaining our health care system is indeed a priority for Canadians and certainly for the people of the province of Ontario.

When people identify Canada's strengths, the fact that we have one of the finest health care systems in the world always comes to the top of the list. People value their access to a health care system that ensures high quality of care without regard to ability to pay. We compare our health care system to that of the United States, where more of the GNP, the gross national product, is actually spent on providing health care but where there is limited access to care for those who cannot

pay and those who can pay can be bankrupted by illness. We say categorically, as Canadians and as Ontarians, that we do not want to follow that path.

Thirdly, we look back to an election campaign where the party that now has the responsibility for governing made clear and unequivocal promises that health care in this province would indeed be protected. We questioned, during that campaign, the ability of Mike Harris and the Conservatives to deliver on that promise. We believed then and we continue to believe that they could not deliver a 30% cut in income taxes, balance a budget with a \$10-billion deficit and still protect health care. But they said they would and people in this province believed them. Now they have an obligation to the people of this province to keep their promise on this most critical and most important issue.

Did the Premier in fact not say that the promise to protect health care was his first and most important commitment? The Conservatives certainly stated, because we have it stated in writing, that they would not cut health care. They broke that promise on July 21 in their first financial statement, when the operating budget of the Ministry of Health was cut by \$111 million and the capital budget was cut by \$21 million.

Then on Friday, as you will know, just before Thanks-giving weekend, when the members of this Legislature were back in their constituencies, the Conservatives struck at health care again. This time they detailed where the cuts would come from: drugs for seniors, oxygen support for those with respiratory illness, long-term care, community mental health and, of course, hospitals.

I recognize that the Premier and the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance all insist that they've not really broken their promise, that they've not really cut health care, that this only looks like a cut. They actually intend at some point, perhaps just in time for the next election campaign, to put the money back that they've cut, to reinvest it, minus perhaps about \$480 million which was being spent on health care last year but which the Conservatives just don't want to take into account in keeping their promise.

But the fact is that the health care dollars are being cut now and they are being cut as part of this government's deficit reduction plan. They are used to make the deficit lower. We say again, as we have said before in this Legislature, you can't have it both ways. You cannot reinvest dollars and still use them to reduce your deficit.

So when does the government actually intend to reallocate the dollars that they're cutting from health care today? Are they going to reallocate them at some promised future time, when there's going to be a surplus in their budget? And what happens, I wonder, if there never is a surplus and they still need to use those health care dollars to keep their deficit down?

The fact that we face today is that the cuts to health care are being made now. Health care is being cut now. People who need care need it now or they may need it tomorrow. They cannot wait until it is somehow politically opportune for this government to decide to reallocate its health care dollars.

I think we have seen in this Legislature that it is going to be very tempting for the government and the Minister of Health, very tempting and perhaps too easy, simply to say, "We're not really cutting health care service, we're just going to do things more efficiently, we're going to cut down waste and abuse," and they say that knowing they then have no responsibility whatsoever for what happens to people who can't get the health care they need. Someone else will just be at fault for not having used the health care dollars wisely.

It would be absolutely irresponsible for this government to reduce the dollars going into health care without knowing what the impact of the cuts will be, and yet that is exactly what is happening. How will hospitals cope with a first funding reduction of about \$20 million when they have already been struggling to keep the surgical waiting lists down and emergency rooms open in the face of earlier cuts and the pressures of the social contract?

Does the finding of this \$20 million through something that the Minister of Health calls cash management mean the hospitals will still have the same money they had last year or not? Clearly not, if the government's going to use \$20 million to reduce its deficit. Hospitals are forced to take out short-term loans to pay their monthly bills. The dollars they have will be going to interest payments, not to health care. And I ask, is this a good use of health care dollars? This is quite simply a \$20-million offloading on to the hospitals and it will come out of the hospitals' budgets for patient services.

I find it absolutely amazing that the Minister of Health can say in this Legislature that their cuts will not affect front-line services, as indeed he said yesterday, because this minister cannot guarantee, could not guarantee today when we asked him the question directly, that he can ensure that there will not be front-line services cut because this government is cutting funding.

The list of cuts goes on. The minister says, "We're not really cutting back on front-line services to those people with respiratory illnesses who need oxygen programs." He says no one is going to be taken off the home oxygen program; all he says is that they'll be discouraged from using liquid oxygen. Now, that the minister describes as being an administrative cut. I suggest it is not an administrative cut to say to people, "We're not going to fund the portable oxygen tanks, so you are going to lose your mobility and your illness is going to be even more crippling than it already is."

I wonder whether this government has really looked at what its cuts will mean to health care and to the people who need it, or is it just cutting blindly, in such a hurry to demonstrate that it's going to make the tough decisions that it doesn't particularly care whether decisions can be implemented successfully or whether they make sense even in economic terms, let alone human ones.

My intention today is not to detail all the cuts that the government has made. My intention is to call clearly a cut a cut and to demand that the Premier and the members of his government take some responsibility for what they are doing to health care in this province.

My concern too is with what's coming next. We do not know what the transfer payments to hospitals will be next

year. The minister still does not deny that he's considering cuts of as much as 20%. The government cannot defend large cuts to hospitals by claiming that restructuring will protect services. The restructuring indeed will be necessary in order to use our dollars effectively, but the savings from restructuring are still a long way down the road and I would suggest to the Minister of Health that the restructuring itself that every community is trying to come to grips with cannot be effective if the basic funding for health care is insufficient to maintain essential hospital services. If the government has any intention of keeping its commitment to protect health care, it will have to start dealing with realities, not abstract notions and empty words.

If this government is serious about protecting the health care system that Canadians and Ontarians value, it will have to rule out once and for all the temptation to buffer its cuts by bringing in user fees. We thought they had ruled out user fees. It said very clearly in the Conservatives' campaign material that there would be no new user fees under a Conservative government.

But we know too that the Premier has always believed in user fees. We know that he ruled out new user fees for one reason only, and that is because he understood that any talk of new user fees would hurt his bid to be elected. Well, now he's Premier, and he's talking about user fees again. He went to St John's and he said he wouldn't rule them out, and now his government is considering introducing copayments for seniors' drugs, a new user fee by any other name.

1530

Introducing new user fees would be another broken promise, and it would also be a step towards a two-tiered, American-style health care system. We do not want our access to health care to be determined by wealth and we do not believe in this province and in this country that people should be financially penalized for illness.

The Premier has said that there are no sacred cows as he carries out his war against the deficit. Surely the promise not to cut health care, that first and most important commitment, is as close to entering into a sacred trust with people as you can get. The promise has been broken already, and I believe the trust has been destroyed along with the promise.

The question today is, how much more will our health care system suffer and the people who need it suffer before the promise is finally honoured or, indeed, will the Conservative promise ever be honoured? I think it has become only too clear in four short months that when it comes to health care, you cannot trust the Tories.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I am glad to have the chance to lead off this debate for our caucus. I want to say at the outset that I hear some mumblings from some of our colleagues, and let me assure them that I'm only going to speak for a few minutes today.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Congratulate the new Speaker, Tony.

Mr Silipo: Seriously, I did that yesterday. I did congratulate the Speaker yesterday.

Mrs Marland: Oh, I'm sorry.

Mr Silipo: I'd be quite happy to congratulate her again and the entire presiding team.

But let me just very briefly, because there are a number of my colleagues who want to join in this debate, say that I and they, our caucus in fact, will be supporting this motion presented by the Liberal caucus. We do that because the issue that's been raised is a very significant one, a very serious one, and we do that notwithstanding some of the "whereases" that are in here which we take great exception to.

We believe that what this government is doing is hurtful to people. We've had occasion to make our points and our views known on that issue on several occasions, and no doubt we will have many more occasions on which we can do that.

But within the area of health care, which this motion today addresses, we will unfortunately be able to come back time after time and point out to this government and to the people of the province how in fact on what they claim to be one of their sacred grounds of no cuts to health care they will in fact not maintain that promise, because we've seen already from the decisions that they have made that in fact they have taken out \$132 million from the health care system, claiming that it is going to be redirected.

So far we've only seen an indication of some \$15.5 million finally today in an announcement from the Minister of Health of those dollars being redirected. It's clear to us that the balance of those funds is going to be used to deal with the budget and the deficit and in part to go towards funding the tax cuts that this government seems to be so intent on bringing about.

We know that there is more to come, because we know that time after time when the member for Nickel Belt, our Health critic, questioned the Minister of Health about his commitment to funding to hospitals in this province and to other health-related services in this province, we did not get a clear answer from the Minister of Health around his commitment to funding and to maintaining the level of funding. That tells us at best that there is some jeopardy, at worst that in fact there are many, many more cuts to come in the area of health. If the area of health is going to be cut, then I think it's fair to say that none of the commitments that this government has made are really worth the paper that they are written on.

I do want to say very briefly in conclusion that we know that when we were the government we had to start to look at the whole area of expenditure in the area of health care. Despite some of the "whereases" that are in this motion, I think it's only appropriate to point out that although we did bring down the overall government spending in the area of health care from what it had traditionally increased to in previous years, over the life of the government—we were the government—we did in fact increase spending in the area of health care from, I believe, some \$15 billion in 1990-91 to \$17.8 in 1995-96.

I think that's the record, and we could on and detail many of the improvements that we made. The only one that I want to mention today in particular is the Trillium drug plan, which certainly I know in my own riding people are beginning to see as a real benefit, as some-

thing that helps people of low income and middle income be able to meet some of the high medicine costs that they have which are not otherwise covered. That is something that I hope survives the cuts that are coming from this government.

As I say, in conclusion, despite the inappropriate and I think unfortunate "whereases" that are in this motion which do not cast the right light on the kinds of actions that we took when we were the government—and I regret that the Liberal caucus has chosen to take that approach to this motion—we will, none the less, be supporting the motion because the essential point is calling upon this government to restore the \$132 million that was cut on July 21 of this year and to maintain their promise to the level of health care funding that we've had for some time now in this province.

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): As the newly elected member from Huron county, I am pleased and proud to have the opportunity to speak to the debate today on funding for health care services in Ontario. As most of you know, this is my maiden speech, and so I'd like to spend a moment and just say that I am very pleased to be here.

The House will remember that in the Common Sense Revolution the Progressive Conservative Party promised to seal the health care spending. Premier Harris said he was going to seal that envelope in May of this year at the amount budgeted for by the previous NDP government: \$17.4 billion.

But the NDP government so badly misjudged and misspent the taxpayers' money that the NDP's actual spending exceeded that budget—and it exceeded it substantially, I might add. It exceeded that very healthy figure of \$17.4 billion, spending valuable taxpayer dollars not for patient services, not for direct care, not for the needs of the rural communities of Ontario, but for ideology, for the destruction of volunteerism in this great province and for wasteful duplication.

For the past 10 years the government has thrown money at problems, duplicating services in an unplanned, uncoordinated and unsystematic display of waste and inefficiencies. Where was the strategic plan of these last two governments? What were they thinking about? The fearmongering that we're talking about today makes me wonder how we got into this financial mess in the first place.

As a parent of young children in rural Ontario, I am concerned about this blatant abuse of public funds that has resulted in the substantial debt that we have incurred. My young son, as a result of this debt, has a burden of uncontrolled spending on his shoulders that is approximately \$9,000. This government is committed to not burdening our children and to relieving some of the financial burden that they have borne as a result of the previous two governments.

1540

We, as taxpayers of Ontario, pay \$8.8 billion on interest payments every year, and it is rising every year. Premier Harris and the minister, Jim Wilson, are committed to bringing this province's increasing debt under

control. They are committed to enhancing the health care system by managing the system and bringing it into the 21st century. The status quo in health care is no longer acceptable. We have changing needs and we have to allow the consumer, the taxpayer, the user of health care in Ontario, to decide what health care services they want, and it's going to happen with this government.

This government vows that it will not create layers of bureaucracy. The government will promote volunteerism through a program initiated by the Premier and undertaken by Julia Munro, our member for Durham-York. Let us be clear. As a result of implementing the ill-conceived plan, Bill 173, this government is able to save money that was budgeted for by the previous government.

Approximately \$33 million will be reinvested into long-term care and other health issues. The previous government took away volunteerism. The previous government took away the good things that are happening in communities such as mine. The previous government took away flexibility within the system of long-term care. The previous government took away the ability for health services to compete and thereby bring forward to every taxpayer the best service at the best possible price.

I intend to explain fully the path this government has taken in terms of the long-term-care reform, since it seems to be such a big issue, this reduction in spending that we're having in this area, to try once and for all to end the fearmongering that is going on in this House to date.

For the last two years, long-term-care costs to the taxpayer of Ontario have increased by 12%.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): People are getting older.

Mrs Johns: We cannot afford these increases without allocating funds from somewhere else. Right now, we have an aging population—you're quite correct—but people are coming out of hospitals sicker and quicker. We have to find a way to reallocate funds within the health care system.

In July and August of this year this government met with over 65 agencies. They represented the 1,200 agencies that give the taxpayers and the people of Ontario long-term care in our province. These agencies represented disabled seniors, disabled people, children with disabilities and seniors. It tries my patience to hear in this House the Liberals and the NDP talking about us not consulting. We spent days consulting about long-term care. We do consult. I personally chaired these discussions and heard everyone's comment on them from organizations from across the province. I listened to their concerns. They were legitimate concerns about how the system was working, what was good and bad about the system and how services should be provided within the long-term-care area.

It was stated by these groups that we consulted with that they wanted the system to be significantly flexible, to develop models that fit their unique circumstances. They talked about things like clear access points so that people know how to get services within Ontario. They talked about accessibility, of there being services in their

area. We don't all live in greater Toronto. They talked about accountability, that we knew we were getting good service at a good price. There's no way to rationalize that now, to know what's happening in the system.

They talked about the consumer being involved, consumers being asked what they wanted from the system, something that hasn't been done in a long time in government. They want to decide what the core services are that we're going to have within this system. They want clients to be able to say that they like the system or they don't, that things are working well or they're not getting the services they need. These are all important things to them.

They needed an assessment stage that was common throughout the system. Right now, what we have is you go in and you're assessed. You're assessed to death, and they want these things changed. They want volunteers. They like their Meals on Wheels. They want it kept in the system. They want some information systems. They want partnership with their governments; they don't want to be told what to do. They want the government to act as a partner with them. All they want is to be able to have flexibility and to be able to tell the government the system they want that's changing with the consumers' needs.

For the most part, the people I talked to agree that we have to improve the access of the system that's in existence now. We have to have high-quality service at the best possible price. We have to cut duplication and red tape and we have to be accountable for how the money is spent. They want to be accountable for how the money is spent. We want consistent eligibility so that I can get this service in Toronto or I can get it in Huron county. My constituents deserve to have this service also and there has to be consistent and eligible funding.

These people don't want more bureaucracy. They do not, for the most part, want MSAs. They do not want the government to consult any more, they want the government to make a decision, get on with it and manage it. We have been consulting with these poor people for eight years. Two different governments—we're the third government to consult on long-term care. Surely we can make a decision and get a system that works implemented. We will not use ideology to influence how services are provided, we're going to use common sense, and we will seek the highest possible quality at the best available price.

Another pressing issue that affects the people in my riding, the areas of rural Ontario, is the ability to provide adequate rural health care services. The previous two governments had been unable to solve these issues, that taxpayers and the residents of Huron county are geographically dispersed and they deserve to have doctors when they need them. They deserve to have emergency care when they need it. The last two governments have not done this and they have failed to address this urgent matter that affects a lot of the population. The government is dealing with these problems.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): It's all yours.

Mrs Johns: You're right. They're dealing with the problems. We have introduced Bill 50. We have brought

doctors in to solve part of this problem. This was not done in the last government. We plan to practise in the underserviced areas, reinvest taxpayers' dollars where they are needed: on the front lines, not in the bureaucracy.

This government is looking at ways to keep emergency services in rural Ontario and in Huron county. We are committed to health care for everyone; not just the greater Toronto area, for rural Ontario and northern Ontario also. This government is committed to rural health care and to maintaining its integrity.

I am proud to be part of the solution to the problems facing the taxpayers of Ontario today. I am proud to be participating as a representative of the people to ensure that there will be money available for health care in the future by changing the way we do business today. We have to do business different today to ensure that health care will be here tomorrow: health care for my growing children, health care for my parents, health care for all Ontarians.

We must preserve and we will preserve health care as a result of our policies and our management of the health care system. Status quo is no longer acceptable. If we stay with status quo, mediocrity will come into the system. Mediocrity in this health care system of Ontario is not what any of us want.

1550

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Regardless of what area we speak of in northern Ontario, whether it be Sudbury or Wawa, North Bay or Timmins, Espanola or Fort. Frances, Manitoulin or Thunder Bay, the same concerns manifest themselves over and over again. The people in northern Ontario are now convinced that this government will not do the corrective surgery on the crisis in health care being experienced in all areas of northern Ontario.

Northern Ontario is significantly underserviced when compared to other areas in the province. The impact of inadequate funding is evidenced by the lack of medical technology and the lack of facilities and infrastructure, as well as the lack of human resources.

Recruitment and retention of health care professionals continues to be a challenge for northern communities. The quality of patient care is at very serious risk as the direct result of the lack of health care professionals in the north. Long-term solutions are required to attract health professionals and keep them in the north. This is not happening.

Simply put, the Ministry of Health is not meeting the health care needs of the residents of northern Ontario.

The ratio of doctors to patients in southern Ontario is often three times that of the north. For example, in my home town of Sudbury we have one physician for every 582 people, while the ratio in London is one for every 317. This figure does not take into account the shortage of specialists that the north continually experiences.

I could quote from a number of studies to illustrate my point on the crisis situation with respect to northern health care, from the recently released Scott report, the Provincial Coordinating Committee on Community and Academic Health Science Centre Relations—PCCCAR—report, to a number of very valuable studies done in Sudbury, including Operation Equity, conducted by the regional municipality of Sudbury, and the valuable work done by the northern outreach program. But the very fact that the Ministry of Health has in its jurisdiction an underserviced area program I would think suggests that the north in fact is underserviced.

Of particular concern with respect to the delivery of health care to northern communities is the retention of physicians. Currently, a number of communities are in immediate need of not only specialists but general practitioners as well. Again, the Scott report quite clearly concluded by stating, "The Ministry of Health should be responsible for bringing the underserviced areas up to their complement of physicians."

The PCCCAR report, prepared by experts within the Ministry of Health and released in May of this year, in its executive summary claims, "Underserviced areas...suffer from ongoing recruitment and retention" problems "which compromise access to quality health care services."

This problem, and the apparent shortsighted solution, is why we're in the state we're in today. The problem requires real solutions, the problem requires real direction from this government, and we are not getting it.

None of what I have said so far is news to anyone in northern Ontario, and it certainly should not be news to the minister. What concerns me today are the recent cuts to health care announced by the current government.

The eligibility criteria for the northern health travel grant that was designed to assist those who have to travel a long distance to see a physician or specialist have been changed, thereby denying many northerners access to this valuable program. Drugs for seniors and the disabled have been cut. A vital component of the air ambulance services—the multipatient transfer unit that primarily serves the north—has been eliminated. The list goes on and on and on to include \$132 million in cuts that this government said would not happen if elected.

I would like to quote from page 6 of A Voice for the North. This is the mini version of the Common Sense Revolution that was distributed in the north. It was a mini version because it didn't go over very well. But there was one line that even I was impressed with, at the very top, where it says, "In order to preserve and enhance health care services for the people of northern Ontario, a Mike Harris government will guarantee current levels of health care spending," and in big letters: "Not one penny will be cut."

What is clear today is that this government has an agenda that will severely impact in a negative way on the quality of health care in the north, because of the cuts that weren't going to be, because of the 13.2 trillion pennies this government has cut from health care. That's why we find ourselves in the dilemma we are in at this moment.

I will admit that I did see a glimmer of hope from the current minister when he arbitrarily exempted eight physicians from Bill 50 in an effort to attract doctors to the north. On that day the minister said, "I will use this

measure when necessary to ensure the people get needed medical care." I would like to know what the minister's definition of "necessary" is. Clearly, the government's own documents claim that immediate action is still necessary to ensure that the north obtains the number of physicians it requires to meet desired standards.

This all begs a further question of the minister: What are those standards? There seems to be no clear direction from this current government with respect to the kind of standards it is committed to protecting.

In conclusion, the crisis in health care in northern Ontario is at the critical stage. There is no doubt about the diagnosis: It is serious and it needs surgery to fix it. There is no doubt about the surgery or medication necessary to cure the problem. There is, though, doubt about the chief of staff. He continues to avoid the surgery because there is some risk attached to it. While he ponders and procrastinates, the patient—the people of northern Ontario—continues to suffer.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I appreciate the opportunity to stand today in this House and put a few thoughts on the record with regard to the state of health care and what we, particularly on this side of the House, see as the mistake of health care that's beginning to happen across the province as this government takes hold and begins to unload its agenda on those of us who work and breathe and eat in communities and regions across the province that are so important to the overall economic and social health and wellbeing of all of us.

You're going to hear from others some very detailed figures on just exactly what this government has done already by way of health cuts to the system and what it is proposing to do, because it is becoming very clear: The pattern is being established and in fact it is breaking its promise. Money is coming out of the system, and coming out of the system in ways that are in some instances quite devious. It is being couched in language that makes it seem like it's not really a cut but a moving of money from here and putting it over there, except that we don't know where the "over there" is yet; that is still to be defined and laid out for us. Many of us on this side of the House are quite sceptical about all of that.

1600

Certainly, as a government we are on the record as having done some very progressive and forward-thinking things in the area of health care. I guess the biggest disappointment to me, having been involved in some of that in my own community in northern Ontario, is that I see a lot of what has been built up by governments over the years, the Liberal government from 1985 to 1990 and our own government, by way of answer to the very difficult challenge of providing good health care in places like northern Ontario—and providing health care in northern Ontario at the best of times is a challenge. Anybody who's put their mind to it or spent any time talking with people, having town hall meetings or the myriad things so many of us have done over the last few years, will tell you that in the best of times it is difficult. Given the kind of times we're in now, with the cutbacks we're beginning to see and the trend that is being set, I suspect it will be even more difficult.

However, in order to really talk about health care in an intelligent, progressive way one has to look at it in some context, and that's the context of community and how everything nowadays is interconnected: Economic health is tied to social health is tied to health in general. We all know from some of the studies that have been done, again by previous governments and the Premier's Council and our own Premier's Council, that there are some very clear determinants of health, and they're not necessarily tied to whether there's a hospital in a community or whether there's a health care clinic in a particular place or the number of doctors. Determinants of health are many.

The most obvious and most serious one, as far as I'm concerned, is the question of what poverty does re a community of people's ability, a family's ability, in fact an individual's ability, to look after themselves. Poverty has a very direct and serious impact on whether persons can stay healthy, and when they're unhealthy to get better more quickly, and once they've gotten better to actually maintain their health over a long period of time.

Certainly, as we look at this government and its record re the question of poverty and people in poverty, we know very clearly where it's coming from. The first thing they did in taking the reins of power was to grab by the scruff of the neck the weakest and the most marginalized and the poor in our province and give them a good pummelling.

I ask you, anybody out there who has any sense of intelligence about them or concern re the question of health care, does this make any sense? Does it make any sense to take money out of those people's pockets in our communities who are least able to afford it, particularly where it concerns their ability to pay for the kind of program, for example, that will keep their kids healthy, the recreational opportunities we all need out in the wilds, whether it's skiing or playing soccer or swimming? There's a certain amount of resource that's required.

This government, in cutting back on the amount of money to the very poorest among us, has caused a dilemma, a real crisis in the life of ordinary people just around paying for food, just around paying for housing and putting clothes on their kids, never mind the opportunity to go out and enjoy some recreation so they might in fact be healthier and therefore be less a burden or a cost on what we've so narrowly come to define as the health care system in our community today.

Mr Pouliot: Unless you're rich, like the Tories, you can't afford all this.

Mr Martin: Exactly, and that brings me to the next part of this equation that the member for Lake Nipigon so rightly points out, and that's the issue of control over one's decisions. If you don't have a job, if you don't have money in your pocket so decisions can be made, you get unhealthy and are not able to make good-health life decisions that will behoove your standard and opportunities and therefore leave you less a draw on the system and able to promote good, healthy lifestyles for yourself and your children.

In a world where every day we're hearing of—just this past week 1,400 jobs disappeared from the public sector

of our province. Those people will be out there in the unemployment lines, adding to the already large number of unemployed people in communities, as I've said so often before, in places like Sault Ste Marie and Manitouwadge and Hamilton. We have more people now who are not employed, and add to that the multiplier effect: One good job in the civil service puts money into the pockets of the small businessman who owns a corner store, who pumps petrol at the local gas station, all those kinds of things.

When you take that kind of economic life away from a community, you don't give to individuals the freedom they need, the power they need to have control over their lives, to make decisions about who they will be, how they will be together, what kind of house they will live in and what kind of recreational opportunities they will have for themselves.

So we see in this province things beginning to unfold by way of the general agenda of this government that will have direct impact on the health agenda that will not be good. It will not be good in the area of trying to prevent disease from happening, it will not be good in the area of trying to provide the kind of resource that's needed to keep hospitals going, to keep clinics going and all those kinds of things, and of course in the end it will not be good in terms of whether we're able to promote healthy lifestyles and do those kinds of things as a community that we were coming to expect and see as very positive contributions to the overall health of the province.

I would say this is nowhere more particular and relevant and crucial anywhere in the province than it is in northern Ontario. In northern Ontario, any of you who have been paying attention, we have a particular problem of trying to get doctors up into our area and working at that kind of thing. The answer, as we heard from the opposition in that particular sense, was one of trying to throw money at it—"If we give the doctors more money, they'll come up"-and we know that is not going to happen. The now Minister of Health is buying into that approach to bring doctors to the north, and if he takes a look at some of what we did as government, which, I have to say, built on some of what the Liberals did when they were in government, he might find that an answer was beginning to show its head re the question of how we provide health care to the folks who live in northern Ontario.

Certainly all of that has to be done, as I've said before, in the context of making sure that people who live in the north have good jobs and that those who can't get jobs—because there just aren't enough jobs to go around—have enough money in their pockets so they can afford the services they need and put their children, for example, into the opportunities that are particularly available in northern Ontario but, like any place else, cost a few extra dollars to really get involved in.

As a government, we took in the north a more holistic approach to how we might resolve the problem of health care in our region. When I look at Sault Ste Marie and the contribution that, for example, the group health centre has made over the years to answer difficulties we've faced, it's actually quite extraordinary what they've done,

the chances they were willing to take, the risks they were willing to take, going out on a limb to bring professionals together in a way they've never been brought together before and to provide service in a holistic approach that I think needs to be looked at by this government.

This government, if it's going to do anything in northern Ontario, needs to build on some of what's already there, some of what we've done by the way of community health organizations: the Wawa example, the Fort Frances example that's now there. I would hope that there would be no attempt by this government to cut back on those things.

Certainly as a government we did some interesting things in the area of wrapping up a very long and arduous legislative package called the Regulated Health Professions Act, which put professionals on a level playing field so that we could use the abilities of other health professionals, as opposed to always counting on and overtaxing our doctors.

The introduction of midwifery, some of the work we've done in the area of prevention in diabetes, and certainly the internship program in Sudbury and Thunder Bay re the question of a family doctor internship program have helped out significantly.

I present those few thoughts, asking the people of this province to consider health care in the larger context. Have a look at the impact that the agenda of this new government is having in that larger context as well as what you'll hear from the rest of the members today, probably the specific cuts to health care. Recognize, as I have, that it just is not good news for anybody and that we should be doing all that we can to challenge the folks in the new government to rethink their agenda and to put people, particularly, at the centre of it.

1610

Mrs Janet Ecker (Durham West): I'm very pleased to address the House today in support of Premier Mike Harris and Health minister Jim Wilson in this debate on the health care budget.

This government was elected to do the will of the people, to protect health care and front-line services. The Premier sealed the health care envelope at \$17.4 billion, a sum of money that the previous NDP government promoted as the budget in 1994-95. That was our commitment to the people of Ontario. But in order to do that, we knew that the status quo could not remain, and we were very clear with the voters on how we would do that.

My honourable friends across the way were very fond yesterday of quoting from the Common Sense Revolution. Well, let me quote it today.

We said that "health care spending will be guaranteed." We said that "As government, we will be aggressive about rooting out waste, abuse, health care fraud, mismanagement and duplication," that "Every dollar we save by cutting overhead or by bringing in the best new management techniques and thinking will be reinvested in health care."

We were very clear, and the voters were very clear in their response to that pledge. We were elected to get rid of waste and duplication of service, to eliminate inefficiencies in the administration of taxpayers' dollars, and that is what we are doing.

Minister Wilson stopped funding the bricks and mortar for new birthing centres when hospitals are recommending existing wards close. The money saved can be reinvested in front-line services. The midwifery program continues to be funded to provide choice for Ontario's women. I've worked with the regulatory college of midwives and I would commend them for their efforts in establishing this profession in Ontario.

Minister Wilson recognized the waste in the NDP photo card and he put the brakes on it immediately. He has saved the taxpayers million of dollars. He cancelled the advertising budget so there will be no glossy, unnecessary brochures like those that were used to advertise the photo card. That was \$5 million, \$5 million that could have paid the debt of my hospital, which suffers under a debt because of the mismanagement of the two previous governments.

The minister has begun discussion with other ministries to coordinate smart-card technology for this government to take advantage of the newest technologies available today. The government will coordinate the information systems in health care, systems that the NDP and Liberal governments never refined, reviewed or improved, systems that allowed fraud to creep in, that allowed misuse and abuse which is wasting taxpayers' dollars, that allowed programs to begin without any accountability built into them.

This government will implement a smart-card technology system replacing the wasteful programs brought in by, first, the Liberal government, with its overproduced and hastily introduced red and white health card, the red and white card that was given out to all and sundry in more numbers than were even living in the province: 12 million cards produced for 10 million people.

And when the NDP had the opportunity to correct this problem, did they do so? No. They took five years to develop a system that was outdated before the first picture was even taken. The NDP system won't provide the information that health care planners and providers need, information so that planning can take place quickly and easily, so that taxpayers can get a better return on their valuable dollars.

The government of Ontario today spends over \$1,700 per person for health care, more than the national average. We spend almost 20% above the national average for physicians' services because of the disastrous social contract designed by the NDP government, which alienated physicians even more than the punitive actions of the Liberal government.

Minister Wilson is repairing the government's relationship with physicians. They are being treated with respect, as partners and team members in the provision of health care. Discussions are taking place designed to build new partnerships with physicians.

This government has charged all health care providers to recognize the financial ruin that the unfettered spending patterns of the two previous governments have created. We have asked all who provide or who are

concerned with the provision of health care to investigate partnerships, improved management practices, restructuring, amalgamation and the sharing of services.

I am pleased to report that my region has already taken up this challenge. Representatives of hospitals, the community and health care professionals work together to develop a regional plan for health care in Durham region. It is a plan which will remove duplication from the regional system. It will improve the quality of care in the region. It will improve its accessibility and its equity for all its residents. It involved making some very difficult and tough choices, but the community was prepared to make them because it knew that the status quo is no longer acceptable. I was very pleased that the minister was able to approve their recommendations and suggest that the community move forward with implementation planning.

Changes must be made in our system to ensure that every dollar is being used effectively for front-line services. Whether they are hospital CEOs, nurses, physiotherapists or physicians, they all recognize the need for that reform. It is unfortunate that the members opposite do not.

The professionals in the system know that we need to look for creative solutions, to begin to change the way we all do business in the health care field, and that is what we must do now. We must level the playing field and bring in those parties that have been driven from the game, those members of the private sector that may be able to contribute to the growth and development of newer technologies and that will help patients on the front lines so they can improve the services that doctors, nurses and other providers can offer.

In the long-term care field, the minister scrapped the 80-20 rule that the former NDP government brought in because it would not allow for creative partnerships for the private sector to participate in the provision of health care. But the minister also added another proviso to that, that of highest quality and best price if any company or service provider wishes to make a proposal to the ministry. I understand that the ministry has received many proposals from the public and the private sector to deliver dialysis services across the province.

Twenty-five million dollars will be reinvested in direct care this year, money that has been saved by more efficient spending and better use of taxpayers' dollars. That is what this government and the Ministry of Health is all about, providing the best possible front-line services where they are needed and when they are needed, and within the budget, for all Ontarians.

1620

Mr Crozier: It is my pleasure today to rise to speak on this opposition day motion. I want to say at the outset that there's really no difference between my riding and many of those that are represented in this Legislature. I do want to say too that even though those concerns are the same, we all looked at your government and its pledge that the \$17.4-billion envelope will be closed, or sealed. It says in the Common Sense Revolution, in fact, under "Health Care" on page 7:

"We will not cut health care spending. It's far too important. And frankly, as we all get older, we're going to need it more and more.

"Under this plan, health care spending will be guaranteed. As government, we will be aggressive about rooting out waste, abuse, health card fraud, mismanagement and duplication.

"Every dollar...will be reinvested."

As I looked over the cuts as we see them, because the only thing that's been presented to us are reductions in spending—we did hear about some reinvestment today, but we don't know whether there will be any reinvestment over the next four or five years. In fact, let's assume that you took \$132 million out of health care spending each year, and you say that's not a reduction. Perhaps at the end of the fourth year there'd be in excess of \$500 million that you'd have reduced health care spending by, recalling that your solemn oath is that you won't reduce health care spending. So at the end, when it's ready for an election, \$17.4 billion will reappear as magically being the figure that they're going to budget that year. But in the meantime, health care spending will have been reduced and I think health care will have been reduced.

But let me speak to something that's particularly of concern to the constituents of Essex South, and that's long-term care. In this document alone, the one that the Management Board sent out the other day, the long-term care spending reduction in 1995-96 will total \$36.6 million. Right now we know that long-term care is critical. In fact, the member for Huron said that she had spent days looking into this. Quite frankly, I have spent months, if not the last few years of my years as mayor, visiting elderly people in long-term care facilities. There are waiting lists and it is critical. I don't think this is a case where you can reduce that kind of funding or delay that kind of funding. It's needed now.

As a matter of fact, as I look over the 28 cuts that are listed in the year 1995-96, nowhere does it say what your Common Sense Revolution says. Nowhere in this list do you cut waste, do you cut abuse, do you cut health card fraud, mismanagement and duplication. So I assume that when you cut those kinds of costs, it's even going to be greater than you're saying now. As a matter of fact, the member for Durham West said that the health care cards were misused. Nowhere in here does it say they're going to spend money on a new and improved system. All it talks about is taking money out. I can't believe it.

I have a letter here dated September 18 from the South Essex Community Council. It says:

"The Minister of Health recently facilitated seven consultative meetings with 63 organizations. It is unclear how meetings with these 63 groups were facilitated. No province-wide invitations were issued, particularly to community-based organizations and agencies. Moreover, long-term-care funded agencies in the Windsor-Essex county area, including the district health council, became aware of the consultations after the process was almost finished."

If that's the way this government is going to treat

long-term care and, I think in turn, health care, I don't see how they can possibly stand there and say that this is for the benefit of the citizens of all of Ontario.

So today, members of this House, through you, Mr Speaker, and to the minister, I'm going to plead. That's all I have, a simple plea: Don't play with people's fears. Don't use smoke and mirrors. Don't play with their fears. Don't play with people's emotions. Don't play with families and loved ones. Please, Minister, don't play with people's health and with people's lives. I plead to you today, keep your word on this one most solemn promise, that you won't play with health care funding.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I appreciate the opportunity to add my thoughts to the debate today. First of all, I would like to perhaps point out the hypocrisy in the resolution today from the Liberal Party, which put forward during the election campaign a platform not unlike that of the government that was elected. On top of that, they promised some 350 new things they were going to do in addition. So, again, when they try to be a pale imitation of either the Tories on the right or us on the left, they end up obliterating themselves and becoming transparent. I think that has a lot to do with why they went from 52% to where they ended up.

However, we will be supporting the final position of the resolution because, indeed, we are united in conflict to the extent that regardless of how we got here, we do very much agree that the government is going in the wrong direction. We know that this government is in one heck of a bind. They're in a real bind. As time unfolds—we don't have to deliver the knockout punch today in the debate. The proof will be there as the months and the years unfold and a lot of the smirks that exist today across the way will slowly start to disappear and as the frowns begin to form on their foreheads as they think about going door-to-door on this course that they've set now and realize the disaster that'll be there when they go back to the people some three or four years hence.

What they're facing is an obligation to give a 30% tax cut, reach their extraordinary deficit targets and yet promise to maintain one third of the budget as being a no-go zone—they don't go there at all. However, there are those who have made the argument today, and I think quite effectively, that they've already broken that promise. We're going to be watching very carefully whether you're sustaining that amount, \$17.4 billion, every year along the way or if you will be playing games with that money until the end of your term and then suddenly, magically it appears back at \$17.4 billion and then you say you met your commitment. I think most people expected that you would be keeping it at \$17.4 billion every year. We'll be watching that very closely.

But when I point out the dilemma they face, read the financial papers. Even their own fellow-travellers in articles and columns and analysis pieces that are written are recognizing they're in some trouble. In fact, one of them, a very prominent individual who has a great deal of influence in these areas, is saying this government ought to go back to the people right now and get permission to break its promise on health because it's not

going to be able to do everything. I doubt very much that the politics of the day will allow that to happen. But there's no question that you've got a big-time problem, and we're watching every day and every penny. It's not going to work the way you suggested.

I only want to make a few comments, but there are two points I do want to mention before I take my place. The first is that my colleague the member for Sault Ste Marie talked a bit about health determinants, and I want to focus on that also, because it has been argued that historically the greatest benefit to public health was not the creation of hospitals, was not the purchase of any particular machinery, was not any particular operating procedure or magic medicine, for that matter. No. It has been argued by experts in the field that the greatest benefit to health care for the public was clean water.

Clean water, providing clean water to the public, was the single greatest advancement in keeping people healthy. Yet I suggest to you, Mr Speaker, that this government, under the Common Sense Revolution, would say it doesn't have enough money to build water treatment plants and sewage treatment plants. So had they been in government in those days, we'd still be back in the Dark Ages, because that doesn't fit the narrowly defined idea of what common sense is. If it's not in the book, it doesn't exist.

1630

My last point is to say very directly to the people of Ontario on this issue of health care, so far all they've got are promises—broken promises, we would argue, but promises none the less—and I would ask people to think very carefully about what the agenda of this government has been to date.

They have cut benefits to workers who are injured on the job. They've already announced they're doing that. They have cut money to families in poverty, which means children already in poverty will be poorer because of this government. They've introduced labour legislation that is meant to decimate the rights that workers have gained over the years.

They are creating an Ontario that I think most people will reject when they begin to see it actually form in reality. When the public take a look at what this government has done so far and ask themselves, "Do I believe this government is committed to protecting health care for ordinary citizens?" it's like the used car salesman kicking the tire and saying, "Trust me; just trust me."

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I appreciate the comments from my colleague across the floor in the NDP caucus, and I find it passing strange, I want to say at the introduction of my remarks, that the member would in any way be supporting, and I understand his caucus is going to support, this Liberal motion on health care today.

The motion reads in part:

"Whereas the NDP government was the first government in the history of the province of Ontario to reduce the budget of the Ministry of Health in real dollars; and

"Whereas the NDP government inflicted chaos upon the health care system with the introduction of the social contract, which resulted in a deterioration in the quality of care provided in Ontario; and

"Whereas the NDP government attempted to introduce user fees to the Ontario drug benefit program and then removed more than 230 drugs from the Ontario drug benefit program without first consulting with those affected by this change; and

"Whereas the NDP government reneged on its funding promises for hospitals in the province of Ontario and reduced the budgets of provincial psychiatric hospitals," and it goes on and on.

So I say it is strange indeed that the NDP have decided to get in bed with the Liberals with respect to today's opposition motion, given that it's highly critical, and highly truthful, of the way the previous government conducted itself in the area of health care over the last five years.

Now, yes, they did inherit a bit of a mess. We had a health card system with some 12 million health cards floating out there for a population of 10 million people.

I know the honourable member for Beaches-Woodbine will likely remind me, as the hecklers behind her were before, that I somewhat made a bit of a name for myself, I suppose, in this chamber anyway, for criticizing the previous government for the amount of fraud that was in the system. And I agree, the NDP inherited the red and white health card system, which, by the way, doesn't tell us in any way what's happening in our health care system; it's simply a nice red and white card with a number on it and a magnetic strip on the back. It has no relation to a central database whatsoever, and today the Minister of Health can't possibly tell you how many hips are done in the province of Ontario.

Lo and behold, Visa does a better job of keeping track of its customers than we do our customers, the people and the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. If we could at least get to the level of Visa and MasterCard in this province in terms of information systems, we would be doing a great thing for the future management and in the ability to find future savings and administrative savings within the Ministry of Health budget and in the ability we would have to reinvest those savings in high-priority areas, because we'd know better where our priorities are.

Currently, the health care system relies—and this is some good work the NDP did do in setting up the joint management committee, which the OMA walked out of a few months ago, but out of that came ICES, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, and Dr David Naylor. All members will recall that Dr Naylor and his team produced an atlas last year, which gave us, for, I would argue, one of the first times in the history of health care in Ontario, a snapshot of what was happening in a particular time period in the system.

With respect to health cards, which the previous government did inherit from the government before that, I say to members that we are working, I am working very, very hard, with other ministries because we require this type of tombstone data: the name, address, birthdate, sex and some other information of citizens of this province by other ministries. So I'm working very hard

to come up with a central database between ministries so that for the first time in this province, when somebody fills out a death certificate, the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations could actually notify all the other ministries that you no longer need your driver's licence, you no longer need your health card, you no longer need a number of other privilege cards because you're dead.

Now, when I explain this to my constituents back in Simcoe West they assume all of the government's computers talk to each other, and it's mind-boggling. They find out and they wonder why people get health cards six months after they're deceased. They wonder why they get these things in the mail. It's because our computers don't talk with each other. So I ask all members to be patient for a little while longer as I continue to work with my colleagues in an earnest way, in a way that hasn't been done before, to try and come forward with a common database, try and get our computers talking to each other and try and get a system in place where we can actually know then for the first time what's happening on a daily basis in our health care system.

We have a model to go by, I should mention for the information of members: Manitoba. I had a meeting recently with the Health minister from Manitoba. He is able on any given day to tell you what's going on, the transactions that are occurring in the health care system. The future savings in health will come from knowing what's happening in the system, from good people like Dr David Naylor and the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in terms of writing physician protocols, health provider protocols and guidelines so we can be delivering the right service at the right price by the right provider. That will be a big step and something we're working on.

I also find it passing strange that the leader of the official opposition would have the nerve to bring forward a resolution that calls on this government to continue to spend \$17.8 billion on health care when the true budget of the Ministry of Health is supposed to be \$17.4 billion, when the red book—remember this red book? This is the thing they ran around the province with.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Wilson: On page 30 of the red book. It is astounding that this resolution today says we're not living up to our health care commitment when we sealed the budget at the known and proven figure of \$17.4 billion in May 1994. When we wrote the Common Sense Revolution we went on Mr Laughren's word, the Treasurer's word of that day who said that budget was sealed. It will either be flat-lined or reduced by 1%, and when we wrote the CSR we said \$17.4 billion. That's our guarantee to the people of the province of Ontario.

Page 30 of the red book says, "Are taxpayers getting good value for the \$17 billion spent each year on health care...?" That's just one. I just had a minute to look at this thing, because surprisingly I didn't vote for these people and I really didn't spend a lot of time reading this book. But I also noticed on another page, if I can find that very quickly here—

Mr Crozier: It's under the next little yellow tag. Hon Mr Wilson: Ah, page 37. This magical figure of \$17 billion is repeated again. Let me just tell you, "Ontario now spends \$17 billion a year on health care—32 cents of every dollar the province spends." I think the leader of the official opposition has the audacity to put forward this resolution today when her commitment to the people of Ontario was a \$17-billion health care budget, very clearly spelled out. She accuses us of somehow cutting health care when we guarantee it at \$17.4 billion, \$400 million more than the Liberal Party was obviously able to pay, going to pay, for health care in the province of Ontario.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): You know that's not true. You know that's not true.

Hon Mr Wilson: The member for Oriole in her usual wonderful interjections suggests it isn't true. Read your own book at pages 30 and 37, and I think there are other references to it, when I find time to find it.

1640

What we've been doing in health care and what as Minister of Health I've been doing on behalf of my colleagues in government over the past 14 to 15 weeks, is taking a very serious look at how we spend that \$17.4 billion. As are other colleagues in cabinet, and caucus colleagues are helping, we're going through the budgets of our ministries. I'm going through the health care budget and I'm trying to find administrative savings.

What we've seen through the media in the last few days I think has been an overreaction. It's been an overreaction in that we have not cut front-line health care services in this province. Yes, we've delayed, on a cash-flow basis, some of our capital projects. Yes, we don't plan to spend \$8 million on the oxygen program this year, because it wasn't spent last year. It's sitting there in surplus.

Now, the question I got today from the leader of the official opposition seemed to imply that whether people need \$8 million more worth of oxygen, I should go out and spend the \$8 million anyway and have no accountability to the taxpayers of this province. That is wrong. That is the status quo. That's what got the NDP thrown out, that's why you got thrown out before that, and we do not intend to behave that way.

We are moving forward with an evidence-based approach, and that's why the information system is so key, the need for information about our health care system is so key. Today's announcement on pre-hospital paramedic care is a good example of how we're proceeding with an experimental project, a project that will provide level 2 paramedic services to some 21 communities across the province at a reinvestment cost of \$15.5 million to provide that service.

But at the same time, before those communities were permitted to go ahead and bring in paramedic 2 services, they had to meet some criteria. I grant it: The criteria were set up by the previous government; the only problem is that they didn't fund it. In spite of all their overspending in health care they didn't actually get around to funding any more than the 12 students who are graduating this Friday in Ottawa-Carleton. There was no envelope sitting around with money, so I had to find the \$15.5

million, and I've done that by finding administrative savings, by not spending money that I didn't have to spend on certain items, and I've been reinvesting that.

The criteria that these communities had to meet in order to do paramedic level 2 services required, for example, that they keep track, over the past few months and years, of their survival rates right now, so that when we bring in paramedic 2 services we'll know whether there's an improvement over the last three years, for example.

That's moving towards evidence-based. It's not saying that because somebody out there thinks we should go province-wide with paramedics, we do that overnight and find the X millions of dollars that might cost. We're moving forward in a systematic way, in a sensible way, to bring those services to the people of Ontario, in a way that we committed to with the people of Ontario.

We said in the Common Sense Revolution—and it goes back to the commitment, because the commitment is subject to some distortion depending on what side of the House you sit on. The commitment was very clear. We said we would seal the health care budget at the \$17.4 billion at the time we wrote the Common Sense Revolution, and we said it is sealed over the term of the government.

Colleagues on the opposite side of the House have argued—they want to see every day—that it's \$17.4 billion or \$17.38 billion or whatever. There will be some to and fro. There is no other way to describe doing what other governments didn't do, and that was to find the savings first, not to do what Mr Laughren said, and I was in the House when he said it as Treasurer, "Oh don't worry, colleagues, that budget is sealed; in fact it might even go down 1%," and then find when we get to office that you overspent, didn't claw back on physicians when you were supposed to.

Most of the overspending is \$225 million owed under social contract and other agreements with the doctors of this province, and I can't forgive that. Other people have paid their social contract. I don't think it would be fair to nurses or teachers or front-line workers, so I'm having to recover that from the physicians. It shows up on the books as part of the \$17.8 billion, but it's \$225 million that's owing on those books, which would bring you down to below \$17.6 billion. All of the other overspending that the NDP did, and I've explained it in extreme detail to the media and to members of this House, to get us back down to a \$17.4-billion budget is fully explainable.

There's no monkey business here. I don't think any other government gave the level of detail on the administrative savings that we released last Friday. The Chairman of Management Board released line-by-line detail, the likes of which I hadn't seen in my 12 years in public life, that enables you, as opposition critics and the public at home, to see exactly where we're saving the money. Announcements like the paramedics today, the \$25 million worth of dialysis service, which my colleague from Durham—

Mrs Ecker: Durham West.

Hon Mr Wilson: Durham West. Sorry. Durham's such a lovely area they had to divide it up; a couple of MPPs had to represent it. My parliamentary assistant, Helen Johns—who, by the way, did an absolutely fantastic job there, clearly a better job than I'm doing—was supposed to take more time, so I'm filling it. But both my colleagues are working very hard. Ms Ecker, the member for Durham West, is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Together, we're trying to find those administrative savings and we're plowing them back in.

The dialysis announcement: I'm very proud of that. Members who were in this House from 1990 to 1995 will know that I fought very hard on a personal basis on behalf of constituents in my riding that we expand dialysis services. The NDP did a bit of expansion, but it did that expansion in a different way from the way I and this government are proceeding with expansion. They did the expansion around current sites, so those of us who live in rural areas still had our constituents driving—in the case of my riding, several people having to drive a couple of hours each way, three times a week, down to Wellesley or Toronto Hospital. That gets to be pretty precarious when you're getting into the winter months. You're not alone, members from northern Ontario.

We're trying to drive those services closer to where patients live and work. We had to find the \$25 million. When you've got overspending of the previous government on one hand and you've got a set of books that don't make any sense whatsoever—it does take a few weeks to make some sense out of the darn things. I don't even think the auditor actually signed your books when you were in office.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Yes, he did.

Hon Mr Wilson: He did finally get around to signing them? We certainly went through a period of time when the auditor himself wouldn't sign the NDP's books. Having now had a look at them, I can understand why he might have had some hesitation to put his professional reputation as a chartered accountant on the line.

So we find the savings and we reinvest them. We have other reinvestments that we know we have to do. The situation in Ottawa, where there are over 300 people on a cardiac waiting list, is absolutely unacceptable. That one I want to explain to the people of Ottawa and the members of this House, Mr Speaker. You yourself would be quite interested in this in terms of the fact that we have a bit of a problem there. We have a problem in that Ottawa Civic Hospital, which is responsible for the Heart Institute—and I hope everybody will pay attention to this—has a surplus of several million dollars.

Now, no Minister of Health owns hospitals in this province. Actually, communities are quite shocked when you tell them that they own their hospital. They are public hospitals, private public corporations owned by the community, whoever takes out a membership at the hospital and gets themselves elected to the hospital board or appointed to the hospital board, as the case may be.

In the case of Ottawa Civic, I sent probably the strongest-worded letter possible a couple of weeks ago to

the chair of that hospital board, saying, "You've got a surplus, but because of turf war reasons and others, you won't spend it on the patients in need, over 300 patients on the cardiac registry who need services." That sort of status quo, that sort of approach to problems or the inability to come to solutions because of turf wars or whatever, is not acceptable to this government.

I acted immediately when I saw that. I'm doing everything I can to ensure that the people who are on the waiting list in Ottawa-Carleton receive the services they need. The money's there. In that specific case it's not even a case of us needing to find the savings in my ministry and reinvest the savings; it's a case of inability to cooperate in the front line. The previous Health minister, Ms Lankin, is here. I'm sure she ran into that from time to time when she was Minister of Health—a pretty frustrating situation.

1650

Other administrative savings: As I wind up, because I think we might have a couple of other speakers who may want to say something, there were some very disturbing things when I came to office. Two things come to mind. One is that I met with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and one of the esteemed members of that body said to me that it had been five years since they had been in to see a Minister of Health. Here is your self-regulating college for the largest profession in the health care community, and a prominent member of that college had not been in to see a minister for quite some years.

Ms Lankin: But that's not true.

Hon Mr Wilson: Well, that's what they told me, and I was astounded. Between you and I, apparently the minister, by the name of Ruth Grier, didn't meet with the CPSO.

Ms Lankin: You said five years.

Hon Mr Wilson: Well, that's what they told me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): This is not a question period.

Hon Mr Wilson: That particular individual, who is the president today, made it very clear. I was astounded.

The message, regardless of the time line, was that they didn't feel very welcome, and one thing we want to do is send out a message to the physicians of this province that they haven't heard in 10 years. Do you know what it is? That doctors are important to the health care system in this province. Ten years: In 1986, the Liberal government throws them out on strike, and they've never recovered from that; their morale has been through the floor since then. The NDP get in and it's: "Hammer doctors. Set them up as rich fat cats and tear them down"—old-style politics.

I'm not afraid, as Minister of Health, to say that physicians are important to the health care system in this province, as are our other 22 regulated health professions. But somehow, and I think it was intentional, we saw the previous government and the government before that always taking a jab—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Wilson: Don't get me started. I could quote

Murray Elston, who said in 1986 that he wasn't going to buy any more Cadillacs for doctors. That sort of throwing mud at them all the time doesn't do much for morale when you're trying to ensure that their productivity stays up, that they provide quality service to the people they have to look after on our behalf.

Part of the message too that I've said to physicians and to all members of this House is that politicians and doctors don't own the health care system. Mr Harris, when he was leader of my party and now as Premier, has said it quite often, reminding people that, as we take decisions, we don't own this system. We simply are here with the public trust to manage the system during the time we have the privilege of serving in this House. That's something I'm mindful of, it's something all our providers are mindful of, and it's something that I don't think previous governments—I might be a little unfair here, but I don't think they took enough care and paid enough attention to that particular principle.

When you're yelling at me—and that's my job as Minister of Health, I suppose. You're supposed to yell at me every day. By the way, you're asking me the same questions over and over and over, but if you want to ask the same questions, you'll get very consistent answers from me. You'll get very, very honest answers from me, you'll get very frank answers from me, and you will get answers.

You may not always like what I'm going to have to say. I don't think anyone is looking forward to the next period of time when some 26 hospital restructuring studies are landing on my desk and the desks of the district health councils, and there are some 60 studies in progress in this province. But I will say to the people of Ontario, we have studied long enough. Some of these studies go back 10, 12, 15 years, they've been sent back to the drawing board so many times. Millions and millions—and that is not an exaggeration. Do you want to know where your money's going? Millions and millions and millions of dollars worth of studies have been farmed out by the Ministry of Health. If you couldn't make a decision in the past, you farmed out another committee and you did another study. Those days are coming to an end, very clearly.

We will move where we have good evidence-based medicine, where we have the data. The studies starting to come in are being worked over by the district health councils to provide the data, and in some cases they're data we've never had before with respect to the services we're providing in a community versus services we're providing in an institution, what balance we should have. Some of the answers to those questions are contained in those restructuring studies.

I'm going to have to ask for the cooperation of all members—keeping in mind that we don't own the system; we're here to manage it, to do that with the trust of the public—we're going to have to ask members to be understanding and to support us in restructuring.

I do want to give credit on that note to both leaders of the opposition parties. Mrs McLeod said in a question to me the other day that it was quite obvious that everybody understands the need for restructuring. Mr Rae, the member for York South, quite eloquently in his remarks the other day to this chamber talked at length about the need to get on with restructuring. So I appreciate that support. There are some tough decisions coming up.

I also need your ideas. We shouldn't have so much politics in health care. Some of the waste that we haveprevious deputy ministers used to sit down with groups and they'd buy them off with research grants and stuff like that. We just can't do that any more. We have precious dollars. No one's argued that \$17.4 billion isn't enough to spend on health care. The member for Durham West pointed out some of the statistics in terms of how much we spend per capita. We rank up there in the world with any other jurisdiction. We're spending enough money on health care in this province. We need the help, though, of all members to ensure we spend that money wisely. Take the politics out of health care. Stop the individual lobbying for your particular piece of turf and look at the whole system in your region. That would be very, very helpful for us to get on with truly restructuring and re-engineering the health care system.

You consider the facts: \$8.8 billion we spend today on just interest, much of it to foreigners, to pay for an almost \$100-billion debt in this province. To put that into perspective, that's twice what we spend on OHIP in this province. So if people are wondering why we have to find savings, reinvest, keep the envelope sealed, and why other colleagues have to find real savings and pass them off to treasury, the fact of the matter is, we are broke. So we said in the Common Sense Revolution, we said in the campaign, that health care is the top priority of the Mike Harris government. We did that by sealing the budget. We said in addition we would be aggressive in rooting out fraud, waste, duplication, to bring efficiencies and the best management techniques to the system, and we're doing that.

All I ask today is that we have cooperation from members of the House. Pick on all the other portfolios, put your politics there, but don't put it in health care. It's far too precious and there's far too much constraint on all budgets to be fooling around.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This lecture's too much from you. We have listened to you for five years in the House.

Hon Mr Wilson: The member said, "We listened to you for five years." I never once got up and asked for more money in health care. I got up and when I talked about dialysis, who gave the government more time to respond? Two and a half years? It took me two and a half weeks. How in the world? They sent it out for study three times. This is what I'm talking about, Mr Bradley: absolutely ridiculous.

Mr Bradley: Then you blame them when the people died.

Hon Mr Wilson: I agree it wasn't fair the other day in the House to blame them for the deaths of my seven constituents who have died since I started this issue. That's a little unfair. However, if they had moved two and a half years earlier, I can say with certainty that my constituents, the seven who passed away during that period of time, would have had a higher quality of life,

would have been able to get services in their community. A couple of these people just gave up driving to Toronto. They just said: "Forget it. It is not worth it getting up, spending my entire day on a bus going to Toronto." Some people just gave up because the government, I think it is fair to say, wore them down.

It wasn't that difficult to put out a tender process that I put in place shortly after coming to office. It wasn't that difficult to find the administrative savings. You didn't need 23 bloody political staff on the floor of the NDP Minister of Health's office. I've got 23 desks up there—23 desks. It is immoral, absolutely immoral, what they did.

Do you know what they did? Do you know why the bureaucracy was so demoralized around here? They ran a completely parallel policy process, a minister-knowsbest type of policy process on that floor, and then they'd walk over to the deputy once in a while and say: "Here's your marching orders for the day, Deputy. I know you're a professional civil servant of 29 years' experience, but your opinion doesn't matter. I've got 23 kids up here sitting in desks who all know more about health care than the bloody bureaucracy." That is wrong.

I've cut it down to eight. I don't intend to hire any more and I can run one of the largest corporations in North America with eight staff. The rest of them on the floor are seconded senior bureaucrats who have been dying for about 10 years to have their input into health care, because that's what they were trained in. They've got good ideas. They're out there talking to people every day. We're going to respect them, and that's what we're doing.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Maybe you should talk to Snobelen about respecting civil servants.

Hon Mr Wilson: I'm sorry. Was this something valuable you wanted to add to the debate?

The Acting Speaker: Order. Hon Mr Wilson: Mr Speaker—

The Acting Speaker: Minister, order, please. I would ask the House to refrain from heckling. The minister has the floor.

1700

Hon Mr Wilson: I'll just wind up by saying a couple of things, and that is, I want to sincerely thank my parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, Mrs Helen Johns, the MPP for Huron, not only for her splendid remarks today, but also Helen, on behalf of all members in this House, has been chairing a process where we're trying to come up with a new model for coordinating and accessing long-term-care services in this province.

We're quite proud of the decision that we took very, very early on in coming to office, just a few weeks ago, to scrap Bill 173, to scrap the 80-20 rule, to scrap the multiservice agency, which would have given us a bunch of government agencies and bureaucracy at \$33 million. When I cancelled that and I saved \$33 million, the leader of the official opposition, who has this motion before us today, criticized me for that.

Give me a break. You know, we saved money. I thought we agreed, as Liberals and Tories, that those MSAs were a waste of money. I saved the money, and in spite of all the explanations we've given to her and her office and other Liberal caucus members, she's still critical of the fact that we saved those dollars. It's mind-boggling and it leaves me without much to say to try and explain that.

Mr Bradley: Why are people getting less care today?

Hon Mr Wilson: People aren't getting less care today.

Mr Bradley: Tell Mrs Boudreau on Else Street in St Catharines.

Hon Mr Wilson: Well, you know, as I said, the argument is there's not a penny less being spent on health care today than was being spent. We spend on a percapita basis right up there with the best in the world, more than most jurisdictions in the world, and higher than all Canadian jurisdictions. We cover more on OHIP, almost twice as many services, as the next province to us. We cover hundreds of more drugs than any other province. We cover all kinds of services that aren't covered in the medicare plans of other services. Ontario has a very generous, a very good world-class health care system, and our job, our job as members in this House, is not to inject politics into that system; our job is to work with each other to bring efficiencies to that system, to drive the dollars to front-line services and away from the bureaucracy and administration.

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I am pleased today to have the opportunity to stand up and speak in support of this motion and to follow on the comments of both my leader and my colleagues.

I must remind the minister that it is his government that is responsible for providing quality and accessible health care to all of the people in Ontario. He will know that I will speak in my brief comments here today about the provision of services to the northerners.

I can tell him at the present time that northerners do not get the same services that are provided in other parts of this province. I would like to remind the minister that Dryden, Red Lake, Kenora, Balmertown, Vermilion Bay and Ear Falls are not getting those services, the same services that are guaranteed to the people across this province, as in North York, London and places like Ottawa.

We may ask ourselves, why is this that we are not getting those services? That is one of the basic principles of the government of Ontario, no matter what party it be. I must say it's not because of the physicians or the health care workers in the north, who are extremely dedicated, and we have probably some of the best and the most dedicated in all the province. But what is the problem here? There is certainly a problem in northern Ontario when it comes to health care.

I just take a look at what happened on Friday in terms of the slash-and-burn approach that the present Conservative government has taken to health care management. I take a look at an already broken promise, something which doesn't surprise me: the cut of \$400 million to

health care services. For the minister to stand up and suggest that this is not going to affect our services not only in northern Ontario but across this province is just too much.

I must say that the government must gain the ability to recognize and respond to the needs of northerners. When we take a look at the northern issues and the specific issues that are common to northerners, we'll find out that there are a good number of problems within the system. I would like just to address a number of those problems that are unique: unique to us as northerners, unique to northern Ontario.

I'd like to start off with the underserviced area program and something I've already mentioned, and that of course has been the recruitment of physicians, retention of physicians in northern Ontario.

It will come as a surprise to many of the new members in the House today that many of our communities in northern Ontario are without the services of a family doctor, many are without the services of specialists, and we must know that we do have very clear needs in northern Ontario.

Up until recently, the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, the hospital in my own home town, has been without an internist, in need of an internist. For more than three years now, the town of Dryden, another community in my riding, has been in need of a general surgeon. Again, many new members of the House will not believe this, but these are some of the real issues that we in the north face.

The Minister of Health will also remember the issue in terms of the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital, where a crisis was created. We have the Minister of Education talking about creating a crisis. Well, I must tell you that this particular institution in Red Lake was in a crisis.

Again, to the members in the House who may not realize, we were without emergency health services in that community on a 24-hour basis. What I'm saying is that when the doctors went home at 5 o'clock in the evening, there were no emergency health services in an area serving approximately 6,000 people.

These are just a few examples that I refer to. These are examples that allow us to take a look at the situation we face.

Let me speak a little bit more about the Dryden situation. As I've indicated, at the present time Dryden is without a surgeon, and both the medical community and myself have been working for months trying to get the minister to realize that he is going to have to help us in this very critical need. We have a fantastic burden that has been placed on both the family practitioners and the surgical services in the area. We are in need of a surgeon in Dryden at the present time, and I call upon the minister to take a close look at what is happening there and address this problem, which we, again, have brought to him many, many times, immediately.

Let me go back to emergency room services. Of course the minister will recall the Red Lake situation. He and I spoke at length as we sat in opposition, in the two opposition parties, about this. I indicated earlier that in the Red Lake area, 6,000 people went without emergency services for a good number of months. I must call upon the minister to not allow this to happen again. We know these services are extremely important, and we know he must listen to the people of rural communities, because if he does not, many more communities will go without this very vital service.

I would just like to quote from the CEO, the chief executive officer of the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital. He indicates here that:

"Emergency departments in small, remote hospitals, such as the Red Lake...are a vital community service and must stay open on a 24-hour basis. However, the flow of patients is low in comparison to large urban hospitals. The current system for physicians covering emergency services penalizes doctors in small rural hospitals."

This is a problem that is not unique to Red Lake. We have over 150 hospitals that were surveyed by the OHA, the Ontario Hospital Association, to which the minister referred earlier, and we found out that at least 50 were having problems staffing their emergency rooms on a stable basis; 44 of these were subsidizing doctors to ensure the continuation of emergency room services; and 42 were facing the threat of withdrawal of services by doctors. Again, similar to the Red Lake situation, 14 of those hospitals were forced to curtail emergency room service because of government's failure to deal with the problem and find a workable and acceptable solution for all the parties involved. So again I bring to the attention of the House that this is not a problem for northern Ontario; this is certainly a province-wide problem to rural communities.

1710

Another problem, which has to be the worst-managed government program that I have encountered in my tenure around this place for the last eight years: I refer to the northern health travel grant program. This is a program that needs to be fixed and it has to be fixed immediately. I call upon the minister to take a look at the many complaints he gets about their famous 1-800 number. Now, we've heard about many 1-800 numbers. Here is just another 1-800 number where applicants to the program are unable to speak to anyone, to get through on that line. The processing time for applications is well over four months at the present time, something which we have to look at in terms of processing applicants, people in need in northern Ontario.

Let me refer to a real case, again in my constituency. This is a constituent who has had to travel, on the advice of her physician, to see a heart specialist in Winnipeg. She indicates that she's had numerous calls to the travel grant office and has had to go back to her doctor for follow-up visits, just to satisfy the ministry paperwork. Mavis Chambers, whom my staff spoke to earlier on, has suggested that she has found that this system is just not working for her.

She was told on September 27 by a ministry bureaucrat that they were still working on July applications to this program. Furthermore, in response to her concern—she had been waiting since May 18 for a response—a minis-

try employee told her: "That's too bad. You will just have to wait your turn like everyone else." This is a ministry employee speaking to one of my constituents who has had to travel from the community of Kenora to Winnipeg for specialist services in relation to her case.

The principle of the northern health travel grant is excellent. We know we have a program there that services the needs of constituents in my small communities, that services the needs of constituents in other northern communities and allows them assistance for services that they have to get outside of those particular communities. But I must say that the minister must take a look at what is happening in that particular program and ensure it's going to meet those needs, ensure it's going to service the needs that it is set out to service.

The report of the Ontario Hospital Association recognizes the unique challenges in the north. This is one report that I took a close look at and found that it reflected a good number of my views. This is the 1993 report. Let me just quote some of the things that they reported:

"The northern area of the province is unique and distinctive, constituting virtually a subculture of Ontario. Planners and policymakers need to understand and realize this before trying to bring about change."

The report goes on to say, "Studies have shown that the first nations have their own distinct health care needs and requirements." I must remind the minister of that.

The following quote, if I may, best sums up the difficulties and challenges of health care in the north. It too is from the OHA's northern task force:

"Dealing with the 'northern factor' must go beyond development of suitable guidelines for services and care in the north. What is needed is a vision for the north.

"Today,...guidelines are still developed in the south and applied to the north, without sensitivity to the circumstances of the north. The 850 patient days per 1,000 population guideline set out in the government's 1992 Health Services Planning Framework is an example of this.

"It was developed without consideration of these difficulties in providing health care in the north due to distance, population diversity, distribution, resource limitations or the characteristics of small, northern hospitals."

I think that sums up exactly what we in northern Ontario face on a regular basis. All we're doing as northerners is looking for equal treatment in the province. I want to say that we are fed up with made-in-Toronto solutions.

The Minister of Northern Development and Mines, who is here with us today, has indicated that this government will search out solutions to problems in small-town northern Ontario. I suggest he tell the Minister of Health exactly what he has stated in a good number of releases, what his throne speech has indicated, and that they do get out and actually look for solutions from people who know best: the people who are in need of the services throughout northern Ontario.

I ask that this minister only take examples that I have

given him here today and take a look at the very uniqueness that we have in northern Ontario and that before he makes any more of his cuts, or his solutions, as he may call them, he consult with us in the north.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): In speaking to this motion I wanted to first say, in relation to what the Conservative government is doing around health, and to reiterate what Bob Rae has said, that Mike Harris should resign based on the promise that he made in his blue book. It's a question of honesty and integrity, because of course the Premier said that, the minister said that and all of the Tory caucus said this, and of course they have argued that they would be different when they get into office and that if they didn't do as they said they would do in the blue book, they would resign.

No one in this part of the world believes that he would do that or that he will ever do that. So on this particular issue, we ask him to resign. We know fully well that he won't, even though the rest of the public knows the promise he made all over Ontario during the election; everybody's heard it. He broke that promise and he's not going to be able to keep it, but I'm sure that he won't resign.

What he is doing, with the rest of his caucus, in my view is that he is ripping the floor from under us plank by plank. What they're doing is breaking all the canons of civil society by so doing. When you take away the floor of the social services that people need, that makes us different, that makes us Canadian, then you're no longer the same. The face of Ontario is changed. This government is changing it, and by the end of the term nobody will recognize it; I can guarantee it.

They're preying on the most vulnerable citizens of this society and they're asking us all to share the burden. What's happening, however, is that we're not sharing the burden equally. This burden is shared disproportionately by members of our society, and the ones who are shouldering the major responsibility for this problem that the Conservatives are identifying are the vulnerable: are women, are children, are people with disabilities and so on.

They may not think they're doing anything wrong. In fact, they're asking us to look into this bright future where they will create an economy that works, where the private sector will make this economy work, where by giving people more money back they will make this economy work, but it won't work, and I think we all know that. It'll work for some but it won't work for most of us. And that's what they're doing. They're changing the face of Ontario.

They've broken the promise already and taken \$132 million out of this health budget. And they will take more, that I can guarantee, and we'll see more of it. They will justify it under the name of efficiency, proficiency, making it work better, but what they're doing is killing programs. They will make it better by killing programs, and none of us believe that.

They're telling us that government should get out of the way, and I argue, what is the role of government if not to take care of the most needy and the most vulnerable? If they want to get out of the way, then they should step down, because a government's role is to take care of those who most need, and they're not doing it. They're ripping the floor plank by plank. That's what's happening in Ontario.

As to the Liberal motion, I have a few things to add to that. For me, every time they introduce something it's like an Ionesco play. It's theatre of the absurd. In theatre of the absurd there is no beginning, there's no middle and there is no end in their plays. There is no identifiable structure. There is no punctuation in a lot of that literature. That's how I relate to the Liberals quite often.

I bring you back, Mr Speaker, to the days when we were in power and the Liberals were in opposition. For me it was like seeing Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde over and over again. They would say: "Government should spend; government should cut." "Government should cut." and "Government should spend." It was back and forth, back and forth, over and over again.

You could never quite pin down the Liberal Party. You never knew where they stood. If there is a philosophy of the Liberal Party it's vacillation, it's inconsistency. That's what I get when I listen to what the Liberals often propose in their statements, and this motion clearly says that. You recall during the election they vowed to balance the budget; they vowed to reduce personal income tax; they vowed to protect health care spending. They want to cut and they want to spend.

1720

Mr Bradley: The government is there, Rosario: friend here, enemy there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member for St Catharines will come to order and will stay to order.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, I have the floor. The member for St Catharines will come to order.

Mr Bradley: I most certainly will, Mr Speaker.

Mr Marchese: So that's the problem: The Liberals want it every which way. They want to spend and they want to cut, over and over again. In my view, I don't see the consistency in Liberal policies, Jim. I'm sorry to say that, but that's my experience of what I've seen in my many years in this House.

If Lyn McLeod and the other Liberal members want to help us, what they should do is call M. Chrétien. Call him up and say, "M. Chrétien, restore the health budget, restore the health spending," education and so on. They're not doing that. I haven't heard one Liberal member saying: "M. Chrétien, send the money. We need it for our health care system." They haven't done it; they never will. But I urge them to do that.

If there was part of this motion I could support, it would be something like that. I would see some sincerity in that, but I don't see it. So it's with some distress—and to some extent I agree that Mike Harris should resign—that I can't support this Liberal motion in the way that they have presented it.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I just want to speak very briefly and somewhat in a saddened

way. I heard the minister earlier today speak about the need to rationalize service and the need to deal more competently with the dollars that we have.

You know, in our community of Windsor we embarked on a reconfiguration project some three years ago, a project that ultimately has led to the recommendation that two of our four existing hospitals be consolidated into two others, the number of acute care beds be reduced from roughly 1,200 to approximately 800, a number of recommendations that would save approximately \$22 million a year out of the operating budgets of our hospitals.

Our community worked for three years to achieve consensus. We had consensus of the medical community; we had consensus of the hospital workers; we had consensus, broad-based consensus, throughout our community. In an attempt, and in good faith, our community met with the Minister of Health and presented him with the conclusions of our multimillion-dollar task force report, the so-called win-win model.

There were a number of people in our community who were sceptical that we could ever come up with the type of consensus that we arrived at, a consensus that would provide better service to those who need acute care service, better service for those who need community-based services and a rationalization of the money that's in the existing envelope, to use their terminology.

What did the minister do? The minister said, "We can't go ahead with this."

Interjection: Terrible.

Mr Duncan: Terrible; that's right. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, all of you. You sanctimoniously—that minister sat there and stood there and lectured both sides of this House about not being committed to the better use of health care dollars.

In our community we got a consensus not only to rationalize our hospitals, but to reinvest in the very types of services that we all agree need to be invested in. What did your government do? Your government sent them home and said, "We can't act on this." There's no consensus left in our community because that minister and that government don't understand. Their agenda is to cut. Their agenda is to dismantle all that our community and others have worked towards.

I can assure you, the ultimate test will be in three or four years, because that minister didn't once talk about the old person in Thunder Bay who's home-bound and is afraid that she won't have access to home care. He didn't talk about our aging population and where those folks will get service in the next few years. He talked rather about cheap political points.

It saddened me to hear the minister today. This resolution's the proper resolution. The minister was hypocritical when he told our community that our reconfiguration project wouldn't work. Shame on you.

Ms Lankin: It's an honour for me to participate today in the debate of this opposition day motion. I'm doing so in the absence of our Health critic today. It is certainly a subject I don't mind at all subbing in on. I think that many people in the House will know the passion I feel

for our health care system and for the restructuring and reform that I believe needs to take place in our health care system. So it's always a particularly pleasurable opportunity for me when I'm afforded the chance to speak about changes I think need to be made and comment on the approaches of various governments to really tackling these very large and very complex problems.

I note that the Minister of Health, when he was speaking, expressed some surprise that the New Democratic Party caucus would be supporting the Liberal opposition day resolution today. In doing so, he correctly pointed out that the resolution itself, in all the "whereases," contains many points that are very critical of the former NDP government and our handling of the health care system. I would have to say, having been Minister of Health for a couple of years, that many of those criticisms were directed at my personal handling of the health care system.

I can assure you that I, and I think most of my colleagues, don't agree with the "whereases" of the resolution of the Liberal Party, but when you vote, you vote on the "Therefore, be it resolved," and I can say that we stand absolutely united with them in our belief that the "Therefore, be it resolved" portion of this resolution is appropriate, is important, should be debated and hopefully will, I think, afford the listening public an opportunity to hear some of the positions of the various parties on the health care system.

One of the things that always disturbs me when there is a debate about health care, particularly in this forum, are the accusations that get thrown around and the sanctimonious sense of a holier-than-thou approach to, "We're better at caring about people than you are," or, "Your mistakes have led people to die." All three parties have engaged in this over the years, and I think that should be acknowledged by all members.

What I would urge, as someone who for two years had the incredible honour of being the Minister of Health in this province, is that we actually try and start to understand the complexity of the system, the complexity of the challenges and the urgency of dealing with those challenges, instead of throwing around a lot of partisan rhetoric, which happens all too often, I believe.

1730

When I look at the resolution itself, and I commented on the fact that in the text of the "whereases" leading up to the resolution of the motion being put forward there are a lot of attacks that are flung out at the government of the day and at the previous government, it would be only too easy to revert to pointing out to the Liberal Party some of the statements they made during the election campaign and some of the inconsistencies with what they've been saying in the House lately. But I actually want to step back a little bit before that and talk about where we were at when, in 1990, the NDP government was elected, then when we started to try and understand ourselves the management of the health care system, and in 1991, when I became Minister of Health, the challenges as I saw them.

We had, all members in this House, experienced a period of growth through the 1980s and the demand from

our constituents for more and better health care and a demand from all political parties to improve the health care system. I think as members we equated that with putting more money into the system. There was tremendous growth in health care for a decade under Tory and Liberal governments, budgets that grew by 10%, 11% and 12%. It was double-digit growth every year for over a decade in what is a third of government expenditures. You have to remember that when you're talking about trying to control government expenditures you have to talk about health as a third of the budget—the services it provides, the needed resources to people in the communities and the costs attached to that. One out of every three government dollars is spent on the health care system, and that was growing, and growing rapidly.

There was never a sense that we really were getting a hold of the health care system, and I'm not at this point in time laying partisan blame. It's almost temporal. There was an understanding beginning to grow, across this country, of the need for restructuring our health care system, of the need for moving from illness treatment to illness prevention, from expensive institutional-based care to health promotion at the community level and delivery of services at the community level to a concept of wellness, to dealing with determinants of health, many of which lay outside of the actual health care system in the direct expenditure of health.

That's an important point for the members opposite who haven't had an opportunity perhaps to be exposed to some of the work of previous premiers' councils on determinants of health. I urge you to get those documents and read them because you will actually see that much of which determines our population's health status falls outside of our expenditure in health care.

So we were faced with growing fiscal pressures. We were faced with a need for restructuring and reform in the health care system and a lot of vested interests that wanted to protect where they were at, and yet a beginning of an acknowledgement that there needed to be change. I'll be quite frank with you: I think it was the fiscal times that allowed us to start the process of seriously getting restructuring going and seriously trying to make the shift happen that many had talked about.

We well may have made some mistakes along the way in the choices that we made, but it was always with a commitment to try and improve the quality of care, to try and shift the balance of what was happening in the health care system, to try and ensure that we were, in our government's approach, having the fiscal room to deal with other issues which were the determinants of health as well as ensuring a quality and fully accessible health care system. It was always with that goal. I just don't accept from any member in this House on any side accusations that others care less about people's health. It's what you do in terms of your overall approach and whether you can achieve the goals that you've set for yourself that we may question of each other from time to time, but I think questioning on the basic goals is probably irrelevant and not a very honest portrayal of the issues that face us in the health care system today.

During that period of time, the fact that essentially our

backs were against the fiscal wall allowed us to examine where we were at in the health care system, and I would argue it was at a set of crossroads with respect to the future of medicare. It's almost like being suspended in time. I think we've returned to that point again, and this is a point that I want to make with members opposite because I am very concerned about the direction where we're headed.

In the resolution itself there's some back and forth about whether the health care envelope is \$17.8 billion or \$17.4 billion. I think that's sort of silliness. What I heard in terms of the commitment from the government, leading up to the campaign and during the campaign, was a commitment to seal the envelope at the \$17.4 billion. So whether it's another \$400 million or not, I think if you leave it at \$17.4 billion you've met your commitment. And I did hear a commitment that if there are administrative savings, those would be reinvested, so I expect that there will be savings found and they will be reinvested. I wonder whether or not we will see those reinvestments made in a timely fashion. That is a real concern.

I'm pleased to see expansion of dialysis, and I say to the minister directly that I was immensely disappointed when he made his, I think, untrue accusations of the previous government. I remember working very hard to expand dialysis services at a time when money was very tight. I think these first steps we've made have allowed him to build on that, and I applaud him for building on that. I think the cheap shots that he's taken were unnecessary.

I think the same with respect to emergency services and that reinvestment. That's good. Those are first steps and I hope to see that continue. I fear it won't, and I fear that the repositioning that I've heard of the commitment—you know, in all the questions we've asked, we've never got a straight answer from the Premier or from the minister as to, first of all, whether or not those health dollars that are saved are truly administrative savings and, second, whether or not they're going to be reinvested in a timely fashion.

When I look at the list of cuts, I am very concerned when I see things like birthing centres on that list. I don't see that as an administrative saving. Let me tell you the work that I personally did, building on the work of a former Liberal Minister of Health who started birthing centres in hospitals. I did work taking it a step further to look at community-based birthing centres. Let me tell you that all of the work we did showed that we could deliver that service of delivering children in a much more cost-effective way for normal, healthy births.

This isn't administrative, this isn't duplication. You know, because you have birthing centres, you're not going to have more women having babies out there. It's a replacement of service from a high-cost, institutional-based service to a lower-cost community; more friendly, affording women a choice in terms of birthing. That, to me, is wrong to call that administrative. When you're stopping the expansion of community health centres and delivery of primary health care services through that network of community health centres, that's not an administrative saving. You're making a decision about

where health care resources should be spent and where they shouldn't, and the decision that I hear is to support the institutional-based side and to pull back on expansion on the community side.

With cuts that are being proposed to the hospital side, if you don't build up the community side first, you run the risk, and we've seen this before in this province—I ask you to remember, way back when Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital was closed, what happened to those people you deinstitutionalized in this province, where the people were put out where there were no services in the communities. We have neighbourhoods and people who have suffered the effects of that.

I fear that this is happening again. I see a commitment to reduction in efficiencies across the board, the cutting of front-line services in the community, not building that up, and nowhere for people to go to get the services they need if you continue down that track.

But I think, if I step back, the bigger concern I have is that even if you did reinvest that money—and I ask when you're going to do it; I think the first steps that I've seen from the minister on the two announcements he's made have been positive—but even if you are committed to doing that, I believe profoundly that once your cabinet starts to take a look at putting together next year's budget and you have to deal with the lost revenues from the tax cut, the income tax cut that you've proposed and that you're committed to, you will be in one heck of a position trying to maintain that health care envelope. The pressure on you will be tremendous in terms of the cuts that will have to be made to make up that lost revenue.

I say this from having spent so many hours sitting around a cabinet table trying to deal with recommendations coming forward on the fiscal side of things to try and deal with deficit reduction, to try and look at expenditure controls. We went through multi-year expenditure reduction plans, called MYERPs; we went through an expenditure control program called the ECP; we went through round two of that. We went through the social contract. Believe me, it's not like this isn't a group of people who didn't have experience in looking at every line of government expenditure in trying to make determinations about where cuts could be made.

The size of the income tax cuts that you're proposing and the loss of revenue to the government is going to put such an incredible strain on your promise to also balance the budget, and in order for you to find those cuts I fear that you will not be able to protect fully one third of government expenditures from the chopping axe. I don't know how you can do it. Having gone through this so many times and having looked at all the unpalatable choices—and I know you're making many of them; I don't agree with many of them, but there you are, you're making them—I still say you're not going to be able to continue to do that without touching that health care budget, and I fear the results of that.

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I ask you to consider what it means, in terms of the cuts you're making, in terms of the services that are being cut and, I would argue, in health care—bless you if you reinvest it some time in the future, but I would

argue there are cuts there—as well as so many other places across necessary services. The fact that you're doing that in order to provide income tax relief which will primarily benefit the wealthiest people in this province, and your argument that somehow that's a job creator, that that's going to stimulate the economy—please step back and examine that.

If wealthy people get a few thousand dollars' break on their income tax, do you think they're going to go out and buy that new car, new fridge, new whatever that your Premier listed off the other day? Every economic study that's been done of consumption patterns says that with those people at the wealthy end of our income scale, that money goes into investments, often offshore. This is not a stimulation to our own economy.

The people who spend every cent they have are the people at the low end of the income scale. In fact, when you think of the cuts you're making in welfare, think of the money you're taking out of the economy, the money that won't be spent at the local grocery store or the kids' clothing shop.

Your economics I don't believe will work. I don't believe you're going to get the job stimulation, I don't believe you're going to get the economic growth, as a result of that. I believe you're going to put much more pressure on your revenues. The economic drag you're going to see as a result of all the cuts you're making, the money you're taking out of public expenditure and the civil servants you're laying off and all the layoffs in the broader public sector, all means that the economic growth will slow down, your revenues will not grow as fast as you have predicted because that hasn't been built in adequately, and your tax cut on top of that, and you still want to balance the budget within a period of time.

It isn't magic. I ask you to consider, I ask you to reconsider, your commitment on this specific tax cut and the way in which you proposed it and the timing you proposed for it, because I believe you can't help but threaten the health care system.

All the way through the election campaign, I spoke to so many people, in my own riding of course, and on occasion when I went to other parts of the province, and said: "Don't believe that promise. Don't believe that they can cut all these expenditures and cut revenues by cutting taxes and still balance the budget and not touch health care."

From my point of view, at least, it wasn't just a simple mantra or a simple knee-jerk reaction to the platform of another political party; it was because I'd been there. I'd been at the cabinet table, I had tried to make those difficult decisions, I had examined the health care system, I was trying to implement restructuring and reform, that takes time in a complex system to accomplish the end results, and I knew that the proposal didn't add up and that it really did threaten, in the end run, that health care system.

The resolution before us today urges you to keep your commitment of sealing that health care budget, and it says to reinvest that money—and forget about whether it's \$17.8 billion or \$17.4 billion; I'll be satisfied with \$17.4 billion—and urges you to recommit to your

reinvestment day after day after day. I don't even mind a month here and there in your lag time. What I worry about is whether the budget is going to be that much next year or whether you're going to be forced to take cuts and apply it to the bottom-line deficit reduction, whether it's going to be that much in year three, whether it's going to be that much in year four, or whether we're going to see a steady decline, a steady cut into that health care budget in which, miraculously, at the end of your term, as your Premier and your Minister of Health seem to indicate with the answers they have given most recently, in a pre-election budget, with all the cynicism that the public knows and expects from governments, you're going to be true to form and throw back in those figures, going into an election, and say, "See, we've protected health care; see, we've lived up to our commitment."

If that is what happens, that is not the promise you made during the election. I don't believe that's what any of you meant, that you could cut and cut and cut for one, two, three, four years, and then, in a very cynical move in a pre-election budget, throw the money back in and say, "See, we kept our promise." I don't believe that's what you said to your constituents when you were running or that that's what you meant, and I hope that's not what we see. I fear that's what we're going to see, but I hope, for the sake of the health care system and the health of the people of this province, that we don't see that.

But I say to you, what are your options? I believe your options come back to having to reconsider the particular tax break that you proposed, the timing of that tax break.

There's a member who's just arrived—I won't name the riding—who's shaking his head. I wish you'd heard all my other arguments, because I'm sure I would have convinced you. I'm sure I would have convinced you that you can't do it all.

The health care system is in a state of change, not just in this province but across this country; in fact, not just in this country but in many jurisdictions. The need to invest in community alternatives that focus on health promotion, that focus on illness prevention, that focus on wellbeing and that focus on the determinants of health, those things that make our populations healthy, is the only way in the long run we will be able to afford a universally accessible health care system. It's the only way we will be able, as Canadians, to protect medicare. If you believe in protecting medicare, if you believe in the essence of that program, then you've got to be making that shift.

The reallocation of dollars that takes place has to be from institution to community, from illness treatment to illness prevention, from institutional-based care that takes a look at the end result of all sorts of health problems to the community supports and the health promotion supports that start at the beginning, the determinants of health that keep people healthy in the first place. It has to go in that direction or we won't be able to afford the system.

I urge you to consider the cuts you're making now in the name of administrative cuts. I don't ever suggest that you can't find administrative efficiencies. I was the one who argued that 30% of what we did in the health care system had no proven value. I was the one who argued that we should set up the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and should have evidence-based population health statistics to take a look at and be able to make decisions about directions in health care.

I don't argue that you can't find administrative efficiencies. Go for it: Find them, reinvest them. But some of the cuts you've made are not administrative efficiencies, and I've already alluded to those and named some of them. Don't call community front-line services administrative savings. Don't cut those and think that you're building a healthy health care system, because it's shortsighted and it's the wrong way to go.

And don't continue to box yourself in with these sets of promises that you can cut income tax and lose that revenue to government, that you can balance the budget in the time frame you've set out and can do it without affecting health care, which is fully one third of all government money that is spent. You've got a dilemma in terms of the elements of your plan. There are real problems in terms of the elements of that plan, and if you continue in that line, I suspect that health care and the health care system are what will suffer.

Let me tell you that this party, and I am sure the Liberal Party, will be fighting you every step of the way if that's what happens. If you reconsider the nature of the tax break and look at who benefits—the wealthy—and look at redistributing that wealth by keeping it in government and putting it through the services, then you'll see support from this side of the House. I urge you to rethink it.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): This government's integrity is on the line. It was elected on the basis of no health cuts, and the moment it walked into Queen's Park, the health cuts began.

If we had to rewrite how health service was to be delivered today, given the massive changes in rural and urban settings across Ontario, health service delivery would be so different. What we need is to encourage communities to come up with how that difference is going to come about. We need government to be the lightning rod for that.

The government so far in the Windsor community has failed us. It went into it three years ago with the assumption that the government would be that lightning rod. Today we're waiting for a response, and we're still waiting for a response. Windsor was prepared to go into that unknown with the assurance that the provincial government was on our side. I expect to find them on our side and I don't expect to see health cuts.

Mrs Caplan: I'd like to congratulate the members of my caucus who participated in this debate. They all made a very important contribution.

As I start the wrapup of this opposition day, I think it's important that when we talk about health care and medicare and health services and restructuring and all of that, what we're really talking about is the people in this province who are sick, those in need of health care

services, those who are also in need of compassion, but we're also talking about the health of our population. 1750

That's why we have seen the development of our medicare, of health care services in Ontario as a part of the values of our society and that which clearly makes us different from our neighbours to the south, where they have a two-tier system, where they have user fees and copayments, one system for those who can afford and another for those who cannot afford, and a system—if you want to call it that—that spends 40% more than we spend and yet people are uninsured and underinsured. If there was ever an example of what we do not want for Ontarians, it is to go down that American road of a patchwork that just doesn't work.

I think my leader, who's arrived for the wrapup debate, was very eloquent in her passion that the Harris Conservative government can simply not be trusted. They cannot be trusted not to lead us down that American road, because clearly that is what we fear is the agenda.

I hear them talk about the fact that with the election of June 8 and the change of government at the end of that very same month they inherited a health budget in the \$17.8-billion range. That is what the public accounts say. While they stand up and say that they promised during the election no cuts to health care spending, sealing of the envelope, the expectation of this public and what everyone heard them say was that they would protect health care, protect health care services, not see any cuts in spending.

I think what people believed was that they would protect what they inherited. That's why we've used the \$17.8-billion number.

In our own document, as the minister pointed out, we referred to the \$17-billion budget because we recognized that it was in that range, and the total is in fact important because of the five principles of medicare: universality, public administration, comprehensiveness, portability and reasonable access.

Comprehensiveness is very important. When you stand in your place and you say that you are prepared as one of the first orders of business to accept an almost half-a-billion-dollar cut, a \$484-million cut in health care expenditure as your commitment, what we fear is that means that you are going to try and make someone else pay.

I heard your minister today stand and say we have enough money in health care. No one is arguing that, and I would agree with him. As a percentage of GDP and as per capita expenditure, we all agree that there is enough of our wealth and our resource. When you talk about GDP it doesn't matter who pays, and therefore deinsuring and delisting and all of those user fees and copayments that you are considering, all of those will actually increase health expenditure.

It is very important for you to guard that envelope in its entirety, and that's why we make the point that \$17.8 billion is the sacred trust. I'm using that word. It was used by the Conservative candidate who ran against me when he stood at an all-candidates meeting and said,

"Health care and health services are a sacred trust." I poked some fun at him as I reminded those present of another politician who used the words "sacred trust." I said that I hoped Mike Harris and the Conservatives would not follow down that path of Brian Mulroney, but I fear that they have.

We also all recognize, as we've heard today, that there is a need for restructuring, for reinventing, for re-engineering, for health reform. As a former Health minister I was proud of the efforts that I made and that we made as we started down that road.

But I can tell you that reform, re-engineering, reinventing and restructuring do not mean dismantling, and the test for long-term care, the test for mental health reform is, are people going to be able to get the care and the services that they need when they need it? That will be the test that you are accountable for.

That's why we have been pressing you for a plan for your reallocation and your reinvestment. That's why when we see a list of cuts that includes cuts to community-based services, to long-term-care services, to programs in the community like birthing centres, I could not agree more that you simply do not understand if you consider that as a duplication.

Then you are making a huge mistake, because one of the ways that will save you money is by shifting services to a location where they can be provided with the highest quality at the best price.

That was the reason that the Independent Health Facilities Act, which I shepherded through this House, was brought into being, and it was to be used first to fund birthing centres, because you know there are finite numbers of births in this province. Whether they are delivered in the hospital or whether they are delivered in the community, in a birthing centre, there are only so many women giving birth in this province.

So the good health policy, the good public policy is to say, where can we provide the service most appropriately with the highest quality at the best price? You send the wrong signal when you make those cuts to community services that would be the true restructuring, the real shift. Community mental health programs such as the liaison program for the Toronto Hospital have been cut, and your minister says no front-line services have been cut. You've sent the wrong signal to Windsor and to other communities when you say: "We recognize that you can save a lot of money. We recognize that you can do things better for less, but we're not prepared to provide the few capital dollars."

I'm not saying it's insignificant, but given a \$17-billion, almost \$18-billion health care non-system that we have today, surely you should be using your capital dollars to help create that system and create that network in supporting communities that have made the tough decisions and are working hard.

There's no topic that I feel more passionately about, and I put this government on notice that with the opportunity I've had in the past as a former Health minister I understand the challenges that are facing you. I stood in this House and I pleaded, as your minister has, that these

issues should not be partisan issues. When you do something that protects the essence of medicare as we know it, when you do what you say you were going to do, which is to protect every penny in the health care system and bring in a plan for true restructuring as opposed to dismantling, then, I can tell you, you will have my support.

But if you try to dismantle medicare as we know it in Ontario, if you bring in user fees or delist or deinsure or bring in copayments for drugs, you will rue the day because, I tell you, I will stand firm in my place to do everything that I can to raise the clarion call in this province to tell them that you can't trust the Tories when it comes to health.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Mrs McLeod has moved opposition day motion number 1.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

As previously agreed by this House, the division bell will take place next Monday.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines): Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of October 16, 1995.

On Monday, October 16, we will begin the second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations.

Tuesday, October 17, will be an opposition day standing in the name of the leader of the third party.

On Wednesday, October 18, and Thursday, October 19, we continue with the second reading debate of Bill 7.

There's also been an agreement among the House leaders that private members' business on Thursday, October 19, will be cancelled. A motion to this effect will be moved on Monday.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): It being almost 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 1:30 of the clock. Agreed? Agreed.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands /	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kingston et Les Îles	, , , , ,
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barb (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
J	without Portfolio (Workers' Compensation Board) /	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
	ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, Leo (PC)
	la Commission des accidents du travail	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Solicito
Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister	20000 010111110	General and Minister of Correctional Services /
	of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre		solliciteur général et ministre des Services
	de la Consommation et du Commerce		correctionnels
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Ministe
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)		of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)		for women's issues / ministre des Affaires
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Chair of the		intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la
	Management Board of Cabinet / président du		Condition féminine
	Conseil de gestion	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Minister
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)		of Community and Social Services / ministre des
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)		Services sociaux et communautaires
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	Ecker, Janet (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)		Education and Training / ministère de l'Education
Eglinton	Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC) Minister		et de la Formation
J. Company	of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism /	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
	ministre du Développement économique, du	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Rob (PC)
	Commerce et du Tourisme	Muskoka-Georgian Bay /	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier an
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Chris (PC)		President of the Executive Council / premier
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition /		ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
	chef de l'opposition	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
adopti	Environment and Energy / ministre de	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
	l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
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idiffilloff Last / -Lst		Oxford	Hardeman, Emie (PC)
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		Harneman Emile (PL.)

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Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K. (PC) Speaker / Président
Peterborough Port Arthur	Stewart, R. Gary (PC) Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury Sudbury East / -Est	Bartolucci, Rick (L) Martel, Shelley (ND)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC) Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming Victoria-Haliburton	Ramsay, David (L) Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND)		des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord Riverdale	Conway, Sean G. (L) Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Welland-Thorold Wellington Wentworth East / -Est Wentworth North / -Nord Willowdale	Kormos, Peter (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC) Doyle, Ed (PC) Skarica, Toni (PC) Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs /
St Andrew-St Patrick St Catharines	Bassett, Isabel (PC) Bradley, James J. (L)		procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St Catharines-Brock St George-St David	Froese, Tom (PC) Leach, Hon / L'hon AI (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires	Wilson Heights Windsor-Riverside Windsor-Sandwich	Kwinter, Monte (L) Cooke, David S. (ND) Pupatello, Sandra (L)
	municipales et du Logement	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)

York Centre / -Centre

York East / -Est

York-Mackenzie

York South / -Sud

York Mills

Scarborough Centre / -Centre Newman, Dan (PC) Scarborough East / -Est Gilchrist, Steve (PC) Scarborough-Ellesmere Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs

Boushy, Dave (PC)

Martin, Tony (ND)

Phillips, Gerry (L)

Sarnia

Sault Ste Marie /

Sault-Sainte-Marie

Scarborough-Agincourt

Yorkview Sergio, Mario (L) Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session

Parker, John L. (PC) Turnbull, David (PC)

Klees, Frank (PC)

Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of

Rae, Bob (ND) Leader of the New Democratic

Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique

Transportation / ministre des Transports

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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Nº 10

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First Session, 36th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 16 October 1995

Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 16 octobre 1995



Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 16 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 16 octobre 1995

The House met at 1331. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS HIGHWAY 3 BYPASS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Early in the 1970s property was acquired in my riding of Essex South to build the Highway 3 bypass; 1978 saw the building of approximately 16 kilometres of its planned 24-kilometre length.

Recently, a \$200,000 contract for clearing, grubbing and fencing was initiated on the remaining eight kilometres in order to meet a condition of the environmental exemption order. This was done to establish and prepare the right of way for roadway construction and help protect adjacent farm lands from encroachment during construction.

The problem is that this government cannot tell me or my constituents when the final phase of construction will begin. Since this government has yet to present any strategy for economic development and job creation in this province, I would urge the Minister of Transportation to build on the \$2.1 million already invested by the government in the Highway 3 bypass.

Minister, complete the project, create some infrastructure and, more importantly, help to create some jobs in Essex South.

NATIONAL CO-OP WEEK

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I'm pleased today to rise in the House to recognize National Co-op Week, which is October 15 to 21 and sponsored by the Canadian Co-operative Association.

This year also marks 150 years of successful work by the International Cooperative Association. The ICA is the world's largest non-governmental organization, and its work has touched people in communities in all corners of the globe.

The Canadian Co-operative Association boasts all kinds of cooperative organizations in its membership, including credit unions, caisses populaires, cooperative housing, workers' co-ops, educational co-ops and food co-ops, to name but a few.

Representing over \$12 billion in assets, the co-op sector is vital to Ontario's economy, encouraging community-based economic development. Over two million people are members of the cooperatives here in Ontario.

Mr Speaker, I notice the clock is not moving; I just might get some help from the clerks' table.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Cooperation Works," and I want to say that I believe in that profoundly. Certainly at this point in time, when we are seeing that as communities we are more and more removed from

the influence of global economics, of global trading patterns, of the global marketplace, it really is important for us to remember that in fact economies are created locally. We need to support those organizations in our communities which can in fact stimulate that kind of community economic development.

As a government, we in the NDP caucus were proud to introduce Bill 134, which passed this House with unanimous consent. Bill 134 gave credit unions and caisses populaires greater powers to raise capital and to serve their members. The new powers for credit unions and caisses populaires allow them to continue the important role they have played.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member's time has expired.

Ms Lankin: Are you sure, Mr Speaker? I still read zero on the clock. Okay, if I could just wrap up with one sentence, as I had got distracted without seeing the clock moving, I just want to say that the movement is very important. It has a rich and diverse history in our province. I certainly ask all members to mark the importance of this week and to join us in the celebration of this week by attending the kickoff to National Co-op Week at the reception that's being hosted from 5 to 7 today in the legislative dining room.

TORONTO BEACHES

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): I'd like to ask my honourable colleagues to imagine a hot and sunny summer afternoon with children swimming in Lake Ontario along the beautiful beaches of west Toronto. Sadly, I have to ask my colleagues to use their imaginations, because very few people have actually seen such a sight in recent years. It's much easier to remember the no-swimming signs.

This year, for example, pollution kept our western beaches closed for 84% of the summer. That's in spite of the fact that we have the technology to keep the lake clean and our beaches open.

A storage tunnel has been recommended to be used to hold the stormwaters and overflow sewage for incineration. Surely this solution would be better than the dumping of raw sewage into one of our Great Lakes.

But the former government said no. They said it needed even more study. They ignored Toronto city council's request and studies. They ignored Metropolitan Toronto council's recommendations and studies. They ignored the recommendation of the waterfront regeneration trust agency. They even ignored the studies of their own Ministry of Environment and Energy. They ignored the success of stormwater storage tanks which have kept the eastern beaches clean.

They ignored everyone who told them that we already

have the evidence: Storage tanks and the tunnels will clean up our western beaches.

The federal government has offered the cash. The time for study is over. Our children deserve a government that will act, because a day at the beach should be more than just a figment of the imagination.

DENTAL HYGIENE WEEK

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): October 16 to 20 is Dental Hygiene Week across Canada. During this week we in the Liberal caucus applaud the 5,479 registered dental hygienists who practise across Ontario. Dental hygienists educate and promote the importance of daily oral hygiene. Preventive dental care, such as flossing and brushing your teeth daily, is very good for your health.

Throughout the week events promoting dental hygiene will be taking place all over Canada. In fact, their motto is "Smile. You Have Access to Dental Hygiene."

On Wednesday morning of this week there will be an MPP breakfast right here at Queen's Park. All members of this Legislature will be able to meet their representatives of the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario and the Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association. I would encourage all members to attend this important breakfast to meet the dental hygienists, their representatives, and take the opportunity to discuss the many important issues as they relate to the profession of oral hygiene and dental hygiene throughout the province.

As the motto states, "Smile. You Have Access to Dental Hygiene," each and every one of the members can avail themself of that opportunity to access their dental hygienist this Wednesday morning.

To all those who are celebrating this week, we say congratulations and thank you.

1340

MOTORCYCLE GANGS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Today I wish to address an issue of growing importance to the people of Toronto: the proliferation of biker gang violence in our city.

The people of the Montreal area have lived in fear through a rash of frightening and too often fatal bombings and shootings over the past few years as rival gangs fought for control of the drug trade. That fear turned to anguish when an innocent bystander, 11-year-old Daniel DesRochers, was killed by flying debris from a car bomb.

This summer, similar events in and around Toronto began to take on an eerie resemblance to recent history in Montreal. Attacks and counterattacks on biker clubhouses have spread legitimate fear throughout the neighbourhoods in which these facilities are located.

One of the more frightening incidents happened at a clubhouse in my riding where a grenade ripped a hole through a steel door. Police don't expect that the conflict will end at any time soon. The mayor and Toronto city council have also been grappling with this issue and are committed to working with the police and the province to end this violence. It is incumbent on the province to support them in any way we can.

I urge the Solicitor General to set up without delay a task force specifically mandated to bring an end to this growing threat to the safety and security of our communities. Before a similar death takes place in Toronto, let's take a proactive stance and get a task force together now.

NATIONAL CO-OP WEEK

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West): Please join me today in welcoming to the Legislature the Canadian Co-operative Association and representatives of Ontario's co-ops, and in congratulating them as they celebrate National Co-op Week.

The theme of this year's reception is "Cooperation Works." Since the early part of this century, Ontario's coops, credit unions and caisses populaires have shown that cooperation does indeed work.

Today more than two million Ontarians are members of over 1,400 co-ops and 500 credit unions and caisses populaires. In total, Ontario's co-op sector has assets of more than \$12 billion.

Co-ops have shown how much can be accomplished when people work together to pool resources and skills to meet common needs. For example, farm supply and producer co-ops help farm businesses remain competitive through bulk purchasing and reduced marketing distribution costs.

Credit unions and caisses populaires, because they are locally based, invest back into their communities. This supports local businesses and helps make home ownership affordable for more families.

Because they are controlled by their members and respond to local needs, co-ops mobilize thousands of volunteers in Ontario who donate time and energy to serve their communities in order to meet today's challenges.

I encourage my colleagues in the Legislature to attend today's reception to learn more about the achievements of Ontario co-ops and their plans for encouraging innovative approaches to meeting local needs and promoting economic growth.

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I rise today to again bring to the attention of the Minister of Health the crisis in emergency room service in rural areas of this province.

The Liberal caucus has persistently and consistently raised the issue of medical manpower in emergency rooms for over two years. When in opposition the present minister, red-faced and with his neck bulging, forcefully called on Ruth Grier to fix the problem. Ontarians expect hospital emergency rooms to be open.

From Red Lake to Durham, from Bancroft to Espanola, from Marathon to Little Current and Mindemoya, the problems continue. Marathon hospital has just announced it will close its emergency room early next month. The closest alternative for this community of 6,000 people is 100 kilometres away.

Surely seven months after the Scott report, which by the way does provide the answer, the minister will act. The people of this province in over 70 communities want the problem fixed and they want it fixed now. The answer is available now. Will the minister act unilaterally, if necessary, and implement the solution now?

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Today is the first in a series of statements from our caucus regarding Tory staff and Tory appointments. The purpose of these statements will be to congratulate Mulroney MPs, Mulroney appointments and Mulroney hacks back to public life. The Harris government, only days after being sworn into office, started reappointing Mulroney's gang.

Today I have one of the first examples from a couple of months ago: David Nash from London. He was appointed to the Ontario Casino Corp. His past? He was a fund-raiser for Tom Hockin. Tom Hockin was a Mulroney MP and a Mulroney cabinet minister. When the Mulroney government was wiped off the face of the earth, Mr Nash moved quickly to become a fund-raiser for Dianne Cunningham. After being sworn in, the Harris government fired the only Ontario Casino Corp member from Windsor and replaced him with a Mulroney hack, a London Mulroney Tory.

It's been only three months but the trend is very clear: If you were a Mulroney MP, if you were a Mulroney staffer, if you were a Mulroney hack, Mike Harris wants your name. The message is clear: If you liked the Mulroney government, if you liked the Mulroney hacks who worked for that government, they're back and you'll love the Mike Harris government.

LIBRARY WEEK

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): It's my honour to announce the launch today of Ontario Library Week. From now until October 22 public libraries and other libraries across the province will be celebrating this popular event.

For 10 years now this week has served to spotlight the vital role libraries play in the life of their communities. This year's theme is Log.on Ont@rio: Count on Your Library for Access to Information. It is an especially timely theme because for thousands of Ontarians, libraries are the only entry point to the information highway.

Public libraries are a rich source of information through print materials and also through technological advances. Public-access computer technology is available at many libraries throughout Ontario, and I encourage everyone to visit your public library to explore this new and valuable addition.

I know that many libraries are entering into private sector partnerships to advance the goals of public libraries in Ontario, and the government supports these efforts.

This is a week to celebrate our library system and treasure its many and varied contributions to our communities.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege related to standing order 21. I'm troubled to have to bring to your attention what I believe to be a grave breach of the collective privilege of all members of the Legislative Assembly.

On Tuesday, October 10, the Minister of Community

and Social Services, apparently on the advice of the Premier, repeatedly stated that the government had made no decisions regarding a redefinition of "disability" as it relates to welfare assistance in this province.

I bring to your attention, Mr Speaker, and to other members of the House, the official report of debates, that is, Hansard, of Tuesday, October 10, pages 172 through 174. Recorded in the Hansard are statements by the minister which repeatedly assert that no decisions have been made.

In answer to the leader of the official opposition the minister said: "We also need a clearer vision as to who these people are and we're reviewing this. At this time, no decisions have been made...."

Then further: "I must say once again that we do need a clearer vision of the people who are disabled. We're reviewing that right now, and no decisions have been made."

Then in answer to the member for Hamilton East, the minister said: "I find it very interesting that the honourable member is talking about a definition that, as I have just stated a couple of seconds ago, no decisions have been made on in terms of what the definition is going to be composed of."

Then further, in answer to other questions by the same member, the minister said: "Clearly, as we've said, we're looking for a clearer definition of what disabled is, and clearly I've said as well that we haven't decided on a definition, regardless of what the honourable member would like to attribute."

Then in answer to my leader, where the member for York South tried to make it as plain and simple as possible, he said: "Are you planning to redefine 'disability,' yes or no—it's a very simple question...."

In answer to that, the minister said: "But we also said that we need a clearer vision in terms of who the disabled really are, and we're reviewing this. I indicated already to the Leader of the Opposition, also again, that we are reviewing it and no decisions have been made at this time."

That is the end of the quotes from Hansard, and yet on October 13, in that edition of the Toronto Star and other media here in Toronto, it was made clear that the government had already passed a regulation redefining "disability" prior to the minister's assurances in this House that no decisions had been made. As a matter of fact, according to press reports the government was having to change its regulation because tens of thousands of permanently unemployable welfare recipients would have been removed from the rolls as a result of the one-line change in regulation that was already in place at the time the minister made his comments here in this House to the effect that no decisions had been made.

1350

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would you wrap up your point of privilege.

Mr Wildman: Mr Speaker, I refer you to Erskine May, the 21st edition, which says that the House of Commons "may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt. In 1963 the House

resolved that in making a personal statement which contained words which he later admitted not to be true, a former member had been guilty of a grave contempt."

I ask you to review the situation to determine whether or not the minister was deliberately misleading the members of this House when he said no decision had been made, despite the fact that a regulatory change had been made and, if indeed he did do that, is that grave contempt of the privileges of the members of this House?

Further, Mr Speaker, you will recall the exchange between my leader and the minister and the Premier when my leader began to ask his questions in which my leader said, "I know he's"—that is the minister—"getting instructions from the Premier," and the Premier turned and in fact did instruct, it appears, the minister. If that is the case, I would like you to inquire on behalf of all members of this House if indeed the Premier did counsel the minister to make misleading statements in this House, and if so, then I believe our privileges have been grievously injured.

The Speaker: I will review that.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I have a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): No, Mr Speaker. On the same point—

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Mississauga South, on the same point of order.

Mrs Marland: I'm making a point of order. I think that was a point of privilege by the member opposite.

Mr Wildman: Yes, it was.

Mrs Marland: Not in speaking to the point of privilege, but I would ask you, Mr Speaker, to ask the member for Algoma to withdraw the unparliamentary language by using the word "misleading." "Misleading" has always been considered unparliamentary language in this House.

Mr Wildman: Mr Speaker, I have the greatest respect for the member who just spoke, but I would remind you and other members of the House that I was rising on a point of privilege and I was specifically asking you to review the situation to determine if the minister did in fact mislead the members of the House and thus abridge the privileges of the members of this House and, if he did do that, to then take action. I was not suggesting that had happened, I was suggesting that it appeared it might have, and I'm asking that you in fact investigate the situation. I do not believe I have anything to withdraw.

The Speaker: Thank you. The leader of the third party, did he have a point of privilege?

Mr Rae: On the same point, Mr Speaker: I think we're entitled to a response from the minister on the face of it. I have a copy in my hand of the regulations as filed, proposed to be gazetted on October 14, filed with the registrar on September 28, 1995, in which subsection 2(5) of the regulation is revoked. That subsection provides for the eligibility of persons who are described in the regulations as permanently unemployable persons and describes them as being eligible for an allowance.

I specifically asked the minister questions on this

subject on Tuesday and was told that no such decisions had been made, and I now find by looking at a copy of the regulations as filed with the registrar on September 28 that that's not the case. I think I have a prima facie case which has been set out by the member for Algoma. It's the clearest case I can remember in recent memory where something that a minister said is directly contrary to what the published record of government business would indicate, and I think we're entitled to an explanation for that.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Further to that point of privilege, Mr Speaker, you will be aware that this is the second time in which we have risen in this House to ask you to investigate the possibility that a minister knowingly misled the members of the Legislature. I think you will agree that if this House is to function effectively in the public interest, it is absolutely incumbent upon ministers of the crown to give, to the very best of their ability and their knowledge, accurate information in response to questions. I would ask that you seriously investigate the concern that has been raised by the members of the third party.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Rising on the same point, Mr Speaker: To the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Algoma has alleged that I counselled somebody to misrepresent. This is totally in error. This is an accusation that has been made. I would suggest if there's anything to be reviewed, that you review the language and the allegations, which are totally false and ridiculous.

Secondly, the leader of the New Democratic Party says he's entitled to an answer. He is, and if he asks a question in question period, the minister would be pleased to answer.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In response to the point of order raised by the Premier, I would just say to you that if indeed the Premier is stating here that he did not give such counsel, I'll accept that. That does not take away from the main part of my question of privilege as to the actions and statements of this minister. I would again ask you, Mr Speaker, to review the situation to determine whether or not the minister gave misleading information to this House.

The Speaker: If the member for Algoma is saying that the minister gave misleading information, I would ask him to withdraw that.

Mr Wildman: Mr Speaker, I am asking you to review to determine whether or not that occurred.

ANNUAL REPORT, COMMISSION ON ELECTION FINANCES

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I beg to inform the House I have today laid upon the table the 12th annual report of the Commission on Election Finances for the year 1994-95.

ORDER AND DECORUM IN THE CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Before beginning our deliberations today, I would like to address the House on the subject of question period and decorum in general.

We have now had seven question periods in this Parliament, and I feel it is important that I take a few mo-

ments at this point to convey my views and expectations with respect to that proceeding for the coming weeks.

Prior to my election as Speaker, I heard an overwhelming wish on your part and also from the public for a more efficient use of question period and for improved order and decorum in this House. Since accepting the honour you bestowed upon me, I have been striving to this end; however, it is only with the cooperation of members that a Speaker can assure the orderly conduct of the business of this House.

Today I seek your help in two areas.

The first has to do with interjections. While I'm certainly aware of the fact that, to a certain degree, interjections are to be expected, my concern is that on occasion heckling rises to a point where the person who has the floor is unable to clearly express himself or herself and the Speaker and other members cannot hear what is being said. If I, as Speaker, am unable to hear what is said, I cannot maintain order in this place. Members who persist in interjecting to this extent will be asked to leave, and if they do not, they will be named.

I hasten to add that I have been a member for a number of years and I undertake, as my side of the bargain, to do this in an impartial manner, taking into account the mood of the House. The Chair certainly does not wish to hinder the expression of good humour, and I know from experience that emotions can sometimes run high on certain issues. I undertake to bring some perspective to these situations, but I would ask honourable members to help me in this regard.

The second matter on which your cooperation is requested has to do with addressing your comments in the House to the Chair. This is not a difficult technique to master but one that would bring an important improvement to decorum. Remarks are to be made by addressing the Speaker directly, while referring to other members in the third person. This technique is a tradition in British-style parliaments throughout the Commonwealth and has the benefit of depersonalizing the comments made, thereby keeping the level of direct emotional involvement down.

Question periods to date have been successful in providing the opportunity for 13 to 15 questions. This is an improvement over the past, mainly because preambles have been shorter, as have been the answers. I will continue to monitor the situation daily and will meet again with the whips if that was deemed to be useful.

I thank you for your attention. 1400

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: On October 11, 1995, I stood in my place on a point of order with respect to the comments by the member for Fort York. They were read into the record at the time, as he was the member who had the floor and was speaking.

I understand, Speaker, sometimes it's difficult both to hear and comprehend what the members are saying in their speeches, but it was very clear when reading the Hansard from that particular day that I asked in the point

of order that the member withdraw the statement that he made that day, which was, "I think it's parliamentary enough to say that they are not telling the truth on this matter." I rose and suggested that that's in fact what the member said. Your response at the time was: "I did not hear anything out of order. Continue."

I put it to you very clearly, Mr Speaker: This is in Hansard. The comments were made by the member for Fort York. I personally think they're out of order and unparliamentary. I ask you once again, considering the fact that they're in Hansard, considering they're before you today, and although you may not have heard them on the day they were uttered, you in fact can read about them today, is that kind of comment in order? If it is in order, I suggest you're taking a very large step down a very slippery slope, because if you can now suggest that members in this Legislature or parties in this Legislature are not telling the truth, it seems to me you're suggesting they're lying. I would ask you to make your recommendation, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I will take it under advisement, what the member has said, and I'll report back to him.

LOTTERY FUND-RAISER

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, on a separate point of order, I need your advice. I want to quote from a copy of a newsletter called the Ontario Legislative Highlights that makes a point that I have been able to confirm, and I want to quote: "As a fund-raiser, provincial Tories in Frontenac-Addington recently sold tickets on a draw for \$1,000. The winner was none other than the MPP from Frontenac-Addington." So he won the \$1,000.

The point that I want to make is more important than the fact that he bought a ticket—and the Minister of Agriculture might laugh. I have talked to the election expenses office this morning, and I want to quote from the guidelines: "Lotteries and games of chance: The Criminal Code of Canada makes lotteries and games of chance illegal unless sponsored by specific organizations." Then, underlined, "Political organizations are prohibited from holding lotteries or games of chance." When I contacted the election expenses office this morning, I was told that I should not file a complaint with them; this is a criminal matter.

Mr Speaker, I want to know what I should do. A member of this Legislature's riding organization obviously had an illegal lottery and the member won and pocketed \$1,000 from that lottery, a member who is not only collecting his MPP's pay but also collects a \$40,000 MP's pension.

I want to know how I proceed. How do I file a complaint when this is a criminal matter and the election expenses office says it would be inappropriate to communicate with them? How do I get an investigation? I think it's particularly appropriate since their report is before us today.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I will take the member's comments under advisement and I'll report back to him at a later date.

ORAL QUESTIONSHEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Minister of Health. For some time now we have heard this minister say that he was going to cut health care now and reinvest it some time later. We have seen him cut \$107 million from the operating budget of the Ministry of Health and we are still waiting for the full details on how that \$107 million is going to be reinvested.

We have said repeatedly that the time for reinvestment isn't some mythical time in the future; the time for reinvestment of our health care dollars is now. Today we see more clearly than ever the need for that reinvestment, when we see the story in the Toronto Star, as reported this weekend, that cardiac care waiting lists are growing to crisis proportions. As of July there were over 1,200 people on the waiting lists for heart surgery across this province.

The minister himself acknowledged this problem in the House last week. According to Ministry of Health officials, you, Minister, are planning to make cardiac care a priority for reinvestment of the funds that you've cut. You've told us where about \$40 million is going. That leaves about \$67 million that you've already saved and which you can now reinvest. Would you tell us today how much money you will be reallocating to cardiac care and when that funding will be available?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): Thank you for the question. This government certainly takes very seriously the question. I think I was the first one in this Legislature to make members aware that there is very much a need for reinvestment in cardiac care services in this province.

The honourable member will know or should know that just a few days ago this government—I as Minister of Health—received from the provincial adult cardiac care network a set of recommendations. We are currently reviewing those recommendations and developing our reinvestment strategy at this time.

Mrs McLeod: What I have heard this minister repeatedly say is that they want to make the savings first and then do the reinvestment. It would surprise me that his ministry and he himself were not being made aware of waiting lists for heart surgery that were growing to the point where we have 1,200 people now on those waiting lists.

I suggest to the minister that this is not something where he can take some abstract amount of time for review, because this is not a theoretical problem. We have cardiac waiting lists that are too long. We have patients who are dying on those waiting lists. We have families and patients who are living with the fear that they're not going to make it to surgery before they get off that waiting list. Those kinds of problems are happening right now and they require this government's and this minister's attention right now.

Minister, you have a responsibility and an obligation to reallocate those dollars now; not next month, not next year, not as you have liked to say in this House "in the fullness of time," because those cardiac patients don't have the fullness of time. You can relieve a great deal of the anxiety of patients and their families if you will tell us today when the dollars are going to flow. When can people on the waiting list, people who are literally living in fear for their lives, expect to see the benefits of your promised reinvestment?

Hon Mr Wilson: I agree with most of the comments just expressed by the Leader of the Opposition. It is a serious matter and one that we're looking at. I visited with Dr Willy Keon in Ottawa, the very well-known heart specialist there, just last Friday, to seek his advice and assistance on how we would reinvest dollars in that area of the province.

There's some debate out there as to what the extent of the problem is. Members will note that Dr William Shragge of Hamilton was expressing the fact on October 16, today, in the Hamilton Spectator, that he didn't think the problem was as big as perhaps Dr Tirone David expressed in the article written by Lisa Priest.

We will be reinvesting in this area and I'm seeking advice from those front-line providers who know best how to target those dollars.

Mrs McLeod: I do find it a little unbelievable that the minister would respond to this very serious question and very real concern by suggesting there is a debate about the need. There is a provincial network that is set up. This is surely not a question of mismanagement or greater efficiency. This is a matter of demand and increasing demand that everyone knew was going to come and surely is an area which should be a high priority for the reinvestment of funds that this minister keeps talking about and that his government promised.

It is relatively easy to find out what the problem is and what the need is. We called Sunnybrook hospital this morning. For this year they're receiving funding to do 695 cardiac operations; they need funding for at least 775 operations. The problem is pretty clear. When you have a hospital that had five people die waiting for surgery and they say they need more funding, I think you have to take that problem seriously and not get into some abstract debate about what the need is.

You have \$67 million that you can reallocate, because those are savings you have made now. While you sit on that money, people's lives are literally at stake. I ask you today, instead of simply lecturing the House, why don't you just get on with reallocating the money to Sunnybrook hospital and to other hospitals across this province before more tragedies strike people on waiting lists?

Hon Mr Wilson: I'm not sure how else to put this. I agree with the comments expressed and the concern expressed by the leader of the Liberal Party. I am actively in the field, getting advice on how to reinvest those dollars. I am also actively, as I have been over the past 15 or 16 weeks, going through line by line in the ministry to continue to find savings so that we can reinvest that money. That's our commitment; that's what we're working on.

This is an issue that's very dear to my heart and my own family. One of the world leaders in cardiac care is

my uncle, Dr J.K. Wilson. This is not a new issue. I remember over the years discussing it many times and I remember the member for Oriole having to discuss this issue in an earnest way in this Legislature. It's time to bring some better management to the network and it's time to bring some new dollars to the network, and that's what we're going to do as part of our reinvestment strategy.

1410

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My second question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I believe that one of the hallmarks of this government has been its very conscious decision to inflict its cost-cutting measures on the backs of the most vulnerable in our society. I want to return to that area today.

On October 10, Minister, you were asked whether you were planning to change the definition of "disabled" to reduce the number of disabled people on welfare. You replied, as has been pointed out in this House today, "At this time, no decisions have been made." You repeated that answer several times.

In fact, 12 days earlier you had signed off on a regulation which did just that. On September 28 you signed off on a regulation that states very clearly that benefits would be cut off for people who are considered permanently unemployable. According to your own ministry's figures, the impact of this regulation would be to reduce benefits for approximately 115,000 disabled people and their families, a saving of some \$787 million to the government.

Minister, why did you say on October 10 that no decision had been made on a redefinition of "disabled" when in fact a decision had been made on September 28 to slash the benefits for 115,000 disabled people?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): In relation to the question, clearly this was a drafting error, and as soon as this drafting error was brought to my attention the regulation was corrected.

Clearly, there was no intention here. In fact, there was never intention to affect anyone's cheque; no cheques were changed. In fact, there were no changes to the computer program as well. Quite clearly that was a drafting error. It has been corrected. There was no intention ever, because had there been any intention the computer program would have been changed, which it was not. No one's cheque was affected, nor was it ever intended to be so.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, you're going to have to help me understand the response the minister has just given to this House, because on September 28 he issued a regulation, a regulation which has the force of law, that clearly revokes disabled benefits for approximately 115,000 people. On October 10 the same minister told this House that he was still working on defining what it means to be disabled.

Mr Speaker, I suggest to you and through you to this minister that you cannot change laws by mistake. You, as minister, signed off on that regulation. Did you simply forget about it, did you forget you'd signed the regulation or are you telling the people of this House and the people of this province that you just did not understand what you were signing that day?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I've clearly answered the question with respect to intention. I've clearly given an explanation of what happened once there was a drafting error. That's my answer.

Mrs McLeod: If ministers sign regulations that change the laws of the province and then stand up here and call it a drafting error, what other kinds of horrendous mistakes are we going to expect from the ministers of this government? That is truly unbelievable.

Let me suggest something else. I suggest that this minister knew very well what he was doing when he signed off on that regulation, I suggest that this minister was quietly trying to get away with breaking this government's commitment to protect the benefits for the disabled of this province and I suggest that now that he has been caught breaking the government's commitment, he is trying to reverse himself.

I repeat, you cannot change the laws of the province by mistake. I say to this minister: Come clean. Will you not admit that you have changed your mind because you got caught?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I believe that the leader of the official opposition is clearly off base with this remark. I have answered the question. I have clearly indicated—in fact, I've even indicated that had there been any intention, there would have been changes in the program. No cheques had ever been changed. Believe me. We've clearly stated the intention. I believe the leader of the official opposition is out of order with that remark.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, and I will not delay question period: We have a copy of today's Gazette in which the regulations that become the law of the province are gazetted. That regulation is here. It still has the force of law. This minister not only made it law, but he has not withdrawn it.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): Perhaps the minister could explain to us how it would be that a regulation of this importance would be gazetted, and perhaps he could explain the process by which this mistake was made, if it indeed was a mistake.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The original draft of the regulation contained several provisions, several provisions had to be sent back for correction, and the explanation I have received is that certainly there was a drafting error. I will repeat that again to you: That was clearly what happened; it was a drafting error.

Mr Rae: I'd like to ask the minister again if he can just explain it to us. As I recall, from my experience, regulations of this kind come to cabinet in some form or other. I take it then that a recommendation was made to cabinet by the minister, which included this regulatory change? I don't know; I'm asking.

Was there a package of changes referred to cabinet,

and was that package then referred back, and this item was supposed to be dropped and it wasn't dropped? Is that what the minister is telling us? We need to know the process, because last week the minister told us that there's still now a process, which is apparently under way, in which the fate of literally tens of thousands of people who are now receiving benefits is going to be affected.

I think the minister and the government are discovering what all of us have discovered in our working lives, and that is that these things are a little bit more complicated than the rhetoric and BS of the CSR. That's what the minister is coming to terms with and having to confront.

I'd like to ask the minister, can he confirm that what took place is that the recommendation to drop the whole category of permanently unemployable persons was in fact put before cabinet, that the cabinet looked at it and said, "This is not something we're ready to do because there's all sorts of other changes coming," and you're waiting for those other changes? Is that true, and, if that is true, can you confirm that and at least be candid with all of us so we can understand exactly what this process is?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Once again, as a result of an error, that was a drafting error. Clearly we've stated before, we're committed to protecting the system for the disabled of the province. I've clearly answered the question, I believe this is the sixth time, and I'm not going to change that answer.

Mr Rae: If the minister isn't prepared to answer these questions in here, he's going to have to answer them out there, and they don't have quite the same rules that we have in here. I was hoping to make it a little easier for you, and let's try and answer it here.

I want to come back to this point. I can't recall a time when through a "drafting error" the fate of over 100,000 people was suddenly wiped out in terms of what their benefit structure would have been. The minister is listening to the 200-pound briefing note sitting in front of him.

I wondered if perhaps what he would care to do is carefully and clearly respond to the questions which I am putting to him. Who made this mistake and how would it be possible that a "mistake" of this magnitude would be made by the cabinet in the course of discussing regulatory change as it relates to welfare? What else can we now expect with respect to regulatory changes affecting people on welfare?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I've already indicated earlier on that I've already signed a new regulation to correct the error. It was clearly an error. I have to repeat this, but no cheques have been affected to anyone. It was never the intention to affect the cheques of anyone and once again, the computer program had not changed. No one was affected.

1420

The Speaker: New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Rae: To the same minister: I now want to turn to a form which was left in all the GWA and FBA offices by the Ministry of Community and Social Services that says: "You need to know, on October 1, 1995, there will be changes to social assistance rates. Rates for people who are disabled or aged and their families will not be affected."

A young woman by the name of Dawn Cooper has written to a number of us and her case indeed has been discussed in the paper today. She says: "As a family we are one mom with two developmentally delayed children. The girls are both on Ritalin to help them maintain control over their behaviour. Amanda is 16 years old. She's on drugs for epilepsy. Both girls require constant supervision." Her benefits have been substantially slashed. Indeed, her benefits have been cut to the point where she's not sure she can care for her own family any longer.

I'd like to ask the minister: Is this another example of a drafting error or is this a deliberate policy of the new government of Ontario?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: As you know, I can't refer to a specific case. However, our government recognizes the needs of special and handicapped children and we do have a couple of programs, the special services at home and also the handicapped children's benefit program, which have not been reduced. We are helping parents meet the needs of their disabled children. We're protecting the funding for these programs to help parents with the cost of raising a disabled child.

Mr Rae: This family has been cut in terms of their benefits by hundreds of dollars a month. The facts have been documented at great length by the woman in question. Indeed, the local member for Huron has, on September 15, written to the minister indicating the costs and indicating the problems. The children in question are over the age of 16 so they wouldn't be covered by some of the minister's answer.

She writes that she requires a car. She lives in the country. She's living on her own with her children and the cost difference in the cuts is a difference of some \$723.27 on a monthly income. She says: "I hope this will help you to view my situation realistically. I don't understand the common sense in any of this," writes Ms Cooper.

I'd like to ask the minister, can he explain the common sense of cutting benefits by some \$723 of a single mother who's raising two children who are suffering from a medically determined illness which causes a disability?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The handicapped children's benefit program and the special services at home are programs which are supplemental programs which were specifically designed to help parents deal with their disabled children at home. Once again, the funding for these programs has not been reduced. We are keeping our program to disabled families, by providing \$37 million to over 10,000 individuals to ensure that these families can take care of their disabled children at home.

Mr Rae: There has been a cut to this family. The cut is undeniable. It's a fact of life now for Ms Cooper; she has to live with it. The cut is of such a dimension that your own member, when confronted with the facts of an individual situation, when confronted with the real world

of circumstance, as opposed to the ideology of the Common Sense Revolution, says, "Can't we do something in this case?"

I'd like to ask the minister: When the document went out, posted in all the offices, that says rates for people who are disabled or aged and their families will not be affected, and we now find that in fact families are being affected, is this another example of a drafting error on the part of people in the ministry, or is this now something where the minister is prepared to admit that there are unintended harsh, cruel consequences to the ideology which you are now putting at work among the needy people in this province?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I would like to refer once again the leader of the third party to these two programs, which are clearly intended to supplement the income of families. Special services at home is clearly a very good program, which I once again indicate is involved with about \$37 million.

Just to give an idea, these programs are intended to assist people with relief at home, certainly to assist them in other ways, but they make the choices. The parents are allowed to make the choices once they have these supplements in their hands. So clearly there are ways in which people can supplement their income and it's clearly intended to assist disabled families.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. You stated several times in the House today and the past few weeks that disabled and their families would not be affected by your cuts. We've seen again today by the example that this is not the case.

Mr Minister—through you, Mr Speaker—I would bring to your attention the situation of the Glowka family in London. Their three-year-old daughter, Agata, suffers from chronic respiratory failure. As a result, the child requires 24-hour-a-day care by the parents.

As a result of your \$300-a-month cut to their benefits, this family may be forced to readmit their daughter into London's Victoria Hospital intensive care unit at a cost of \$30,000 per month—that figure given to us by the hospital—in comparison to the cut of \$300 you've made to their benefits.

Mr Minister, perhaps this is why the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, Helen Johns, wrote to you on September 15 on another case and said, "The cuts in family benefits and general welfare are not supposed to affect the disabled or elderly, but they are going to affect the disabled children of Dawn Cooper."

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mr Agostino: This is not from a member of the opposition; it's a member of your own government.

Clearly, Minister, you can't have it both ways. I put it to you as simply as I can: Will disabled children such as the ones mentioned today be protected from your cuts?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It's unfortunate sometimes that questions are prepared ahead of time, because obviously that was my answer to the prior questions. But once again I refer the honourable member to the supplemental

programs which I spoke about. These are clearly intended to assist families to purchase services for their disabled children at home and to give them some degree of control over what services they do purchase.

Mr Agostino: I'm astonished by the fact that the minister clearly does not understand the impact your cuts are having on disabled children across this province. You don't understand how you've betrayed the vulnerable children in this province. You don't understand how your government's election promise to protect them has gone by the wayside.

Mr Minister, there are numerous examples of situations where what you have told this House has not been consistent with what is happening out there in the real world. You were wrong when you said the disabled would not be affected by your cuts.

Mr Minister, what do you say to the tens of thousands of people out there, children and disabled adults, who believed when you told them you were not going to affect their benefits? In a sense, you've misled them. You've told them something that is not the case today. Mr Minister, you have told this House a number of times that they're not going to be affected. Once again, what you have told this House is not consistent with what has happened.

The Speaker: Order. The word "misled" is not appropriate in this Legislature. Would you withdraw it?

Mr Agostino: Mr Speaker, what the minister has said in the House and what he has said today is not consistent.

The Speaker: Order. Will you withdraw it?

Mr Agostino: It is not consistent with what he has said.

The Speaker: You won't withdraw the word?

Mr Agostino: No.

The Speaker: If the honourable member is not going to withdraw the word, I have no alternative but to name the honourable member. Sergeant at Arms?

Mr Agostino left the chamber.

1430

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Last Wednesday, October 11, I had a question for the Minister of Transportation regarding road conditions and winter standards, and this is what the minister expressed in answer to my concern: The minister said he was committed to the highest possible highway standards during the winter season.

Some have received some disturbing, very disturbing indeed, documentation. I have in my hand a memo from the ministry addressed to the district engineer and the road supervisors across Ontario. This is what it says:

"Attached are the Q&As which were prepared for briefing cabinet ministers on the proposed changes for winter 1995-96. As most of you already know, the changes have been agreed to by Management Board but must still go to cabinet" for final blessing, so that Father Harris can give his okay. "A communication strategy is being developed by" so-and-so; "I trust that these Q&As will be of some assistance."

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Could I have the question, please.

Mr Pouliot: Further digging unravelled the following: The Ministry of Transportation is proposing cutting road patrols across Ontario from 24 hours to 16 hours per day. That's a 40% reduction.

The Speaker: What's the question?

Mr Pouliot: But each patrol will cover 190 kilometres instead of 115. Sand and salt spreaders will be reduced by 12.3%.

The Speaker: Would the member put the question, please.

Mr Pouliot: The number of plows—picture this—will fall by 10.8%—

The Speaker: Order. You've been two minutes asking a question. Would you put the question quickly.

Mr Pouliot: Someone, either the minister or the ministry, is being most economical with the truth. Someone is shying away from the truth here. Lives are at stake. What will the minister do: say one thing on Wednesday and have the motorists of Ontario, all seven million of them, live in a climate of anxiety—

The Speaker: The question's been asked.

Mr Pouliot: Are you going to assume your responsibility and ensure the motorists of Ontario that there shall be no cuts?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I would like to reiterate the words I did say last week and assure the member that public safety is our number one priority. Our standards have not changed. How we deliver those standards has changed. We are looking for the most economical and cost-effective way to deliver those safety standards. We are going to hire for average and contract out for the peak periods, but we will maintain the standards Ontario has been used to.

Mr Pouliot: The minister should be aware that winter conditions are somewhat like—and I think the analogy has some validity—a forest fire: When those catastrophes strike, you don't question, you just go. The documentation from his own ministry that the boat of Transportation is leaking big-time proves the opposite.

What is the minister waiting for, that we take some motorists straight from the highway to the bag? Will he carry the guilt or will he go and twist the arm of his buddy Mike Harris for a few dollars more so that we can go to medical appointments, can go and earn a living?

Safety is a primary concern. It's not a matter of money; we're talking about potential lives here. The minister should give the House and the people of Ontario the assurance that, yes, he will stand up and do whatever he can to make sure that the standards that were acquired over the years become the order of the day, each and every day this winter.

Hon Mr Palladini: We are still spending over \$130 million on winter maintenance in this province. I would again like to emphasize to the honourable member that this ministry is going to do the job that it's going to have to do in order for our roads to be safe. So that commitment will be there.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Recent media reports have speculated that the Ministry of Labour will be cutting the number of health and safety inspectors by up to 20% in order to meet its financial goals. The minister has stated many times that health and safety are a priority for her and that she cares about workers. In light of these media reports, can the minister tell us today, will the Ministry of Labour be reducing the number of its health and safety inspectors?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): First of all, yes, since assuming the responsibility, our government has indicated that we are committed to workers and we are committed to the safety of workers. Despite the fact that there has been tremendous media speculation regarding the reduction of health and safety inspectors, I would like to assure the member and all workers in this province that we will not be eliminating or reducing the number of health and safety inspectors. In fact, we are doing exactly the opposite.

Shortly after I assumed this position, I put in place a review team to look at health and safety in this province. We have a 100-day review; at the end of that time, on December 20, I hope to receive recommendations from the team indicating proposals that will give us the best health and safety system possible, that will be of benefit to all workers.

Furthermore, in dealing with the Kells fatality, our ministry has also appealed that particular decision, and we are going to proceed with the decision made by the justice of the peace in that case.

We are committed to workers. That is my first priority, and we will do everything possible to ensure that workers are protected.

Mr Newman: I've received a number of letters and phone calls in my riding of Scarborough Centre from members of unions that this government is sending a message that it does not support the rights of workers and that it is simply a government that is acting on the wishes of the business community. Minister, let me ask you now, does this government support the rights of workers in this province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, we are committed to the workers in this province. In fact, the very reason we repealed the Bill 40 provisions was to ensure that we would take down the barriers to job creation. That is what has happened, because unfortunately Bill 40 gave out the message that this province was no longer open for business. So not only have we repealed Bill 40, but we have also put in place measures that are actually going to promote and enhance the rights of the individual workers in the workplace.

For the first time, workers in this province, all of them, whether it's the third who are unionized or the two thirds who are not unionized, will have the opportunity, through a secret ballot vote, to determine whether or not they want to join a union. They will have an opportunity, if they are unionized, to vote for strike action, vote through a secret ballot for ratification, and for the first time they

will also have an opportunity to decide if they want to decertify.

Our actions to date, whether it's in the area of workplace health and safety, whether it's in the field of Bill 7, are all designed to promote job creation, jobs for workers. 1440

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the minister responsible for women's issues. The minister has been in the past a strong supporter, and I'm sure she is to this day, of second-stage housing and the kind of services that second-stage housing provides to vulnerable people in our province.

Your government has now eliminated funding for Bethlehem Place, a project that helps people break out of the cycle of drug, alcohol and welfare dependency. Bethlehem Place serves victims of domestic violence, mental illness, head injuries or substance addiction and has the support of a wide cross-section of our community, including many supporters of the Progressive Conservative Party in St Catharines.

Minister, with your own record of concern for secondstage housing and for the counselling provided in this kind of housing, how can you possibly accept the decision of your cabinet to cut funding or, in this case, eliminate funding for very vulnerable people in our society?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): I and I think all members of this House support women who have been victims of abuse, in any way we can. I'm not aware of the situation at Bethlehem Place. I would like to discuss this with you.

You did mention in your comments that we took away the funding so that they would not—I think you said this—receive the shelter portion, that they would not be welcome to that shelter. I'd like you to stand upon that, if that's the case.

I will say that we have supported core funding for shelters and second-stage housing in the province of Ontario, but we have taken away some of the support services in the second-stage housing programs. The reason for that is that our main objective is to allow and support women and members of society in Ontario to get jobs so that they can be self-sufficient.

To that end, we want to balance our budget. We have to take a look at every line of every program. We are in the business of supporting core programs so that women can become self-sufficient, get jobs and be employed.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Supplementary? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): On October 5, the minister stated, "We will not be cutting any of the core funding to that second-stage housing."

There is an organization called Harmony House, a second-stage housing organization in Ottawa, which is the only one in all of eastern Ontario. I have been informed personally by letter, by telephone—I've spoken with the executive director— and I've been told by the staff that they have lost all of their funding from Community and

Social Services and therefore they will have to close their doors as of December 31. If the minister is asking for some information, we will be happy to provide it. They can no longer continue: They've lost their counsellors, they've lost their security staff. This goes against what the minister promised. What will the minister tell the Harmony House staff and what will she tell the women who are in need of a safe haven in eastern Ontario?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I can only say that I'm not aware of the specifics at Harmony House. I am aware of the fact that there are some first-stage housing and second-stage housing projects that are closing. I should tell you that the intent behind the ones I have been made aware of was that they would be closing because of the irregular funding coming from three different levels of government and because the way they have been providing these shelter services has not been efficient.

With regard to Harmony House, I would be happy to meet with the representatives, and I'm certain my colleagues involved would as well. It does make me concerned to think that a house on its own would find itself closing. But I can assure you that the core funding to Harmony House has not been withdrawn.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW BOARD

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I have a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last week there were several questions asked in the House about the Social Assistance Review Board and the fact that Evelyn Dodds, twice a Tory candidate in Thunder Bay, was appointed; that Dan MacDonald, who ran for the Tories in the 1987 Hamilton by-election, was appointed; and after question period on Wednesday we learned that a third out of four appointments was also a Tory candidate, Maeve Quaid. Maeve Quaid, a Trent University professor, ran for the Tories as a candidate in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce against Warren Allmand in the 1993 federal election.

The appointment process to the Social Assistance Review Board was dramatically changed in 1985 so that it was no longer a senate for defeated Tories.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Question, please.

Mr Cooke: Can the minister tell us today what he's prepared to do to restore the faith in the Social Assistance Review Board that he has destroyed by making it the senate for defeated Tories once again?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I detect a question there someplace.

Clearly, we've made decisions on the appointments to the Social Assistance Review Board on the basis of qualifications. First of all, one of the candidates the honourable member spoke about was a councillor who had some experience dealing with the social assistance area. Two of the individuals had sat on the Immigration and Refugee Board, and the final candidate is a lecturer and has dealt extensively with human resources. So we're making the selection on the basis of qualifications.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): It's just a coincidence that they were all Tory candidates. It's a drafting error.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Oriole is out of order.

Mr Cooke: Since this question was asked last week and he couldn't give us an answer, could the minister confirm for us today, now that he's had a chance to check, whether or not the chair of the Social Assistance Review Board was involved in the selection of these four candidates?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I understand the honourable member is probably referring to some extent, I believe, to an article that was in the newspapers in which the chairperson had indicated that there were not four vacancies. Clearly, there were four vacancies. Whether or not there's a difference in procedures in terms of appointments to the Social Assistance Review Board from the prior government, I think what really counts here is that people with qualifications have been selected.

EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): My question is directed to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. With the government's intent to repeal the job quota law, I ask the minister to please provide some guidance about how employers may use workforce survey information that was collected under subsection 6(13) of the Employment Equity Act and regulations.

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): Under the job quota repeal bill that I introduced last week, we will be requesting that all personal information that was collected for the purposes specifically of the Employment Equity Act be destroyed.

Mr Tascona: Obtaining workforce survey data was sometimes a time-consuming and expensive task for many employers. I would like to ask the minister to consider whether employers will be able to keep the data collected under subsection 6(13) so that these data may be applied to the non-legislative equal opportunity plan and to non-employment-equity uses such as in cases where such information is required for addressing human rights issues or human rights tribunals.

Hon Ms Mushinski: In response to the honourable member's question, there's no doubt that indeed the data collection process that was going to be required under the Employment Equity Act was a very expensive piece of legislation, and that's one of the reasons we are recommending getting rid of it.

With respect to the rest of the honourable member's question, we obviously can't do anything about the resources that have already been spent, but repeal of the act will ensure that no further resources are wasted in complying with the legislated quotas.

Employers must still collect personal information under certain conditions. For example, if the collection and use of the data is in compliance with other Human Rights Code regulations or the federal contractors program, we will not require them to automatically remove that from their files.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Mr Minister, I hope you have

better advice than your ministry officials have in trying to allow people in Ontario, from Kenora to Cornwall and places like New Liskeard—in asking them to deal with your ministry's proposed cuts.

1450

If they're cutting snowplowing, they're reducing sanding, they're reducing salting, they're even taking away an eight-hour shift for road patrols, what advice would you have for the people in Thunder Bay or New Liskeard on how they could drive safely on Ontario highways in light of the cuts you're going to make right across this province?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I would like to thank the honourable member for the opportunity to clarify something. These particular hiring practices that the honourable member is mentioning have already been in place in Kingston, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste Marie and even parts of Highway 401, so they are not new procedures. This is our way of delivering better to Ontarians for a lot less.

Mr Colle: I'm just wondering, did I hear that correctly? Is he saying his way, the Tory way, is to improve our road safety this winter by reducing sanding, reducing salting, even eliminating an eight-hour shift? Does the minister believe that it only snows for 16 hours, that by some miracle it's not going to snow? Or is the minister going to do what they suggest here, and that is put more money into communication and maybe set up a 1-800-SNOWJOB number so people can phone when it snows?

Hon Mr Palladini: I would like again to inform the honourable member that we are going to be monitoring our roads. We will have the opportunity to react, especially in snowbelt areas. Again, I would like to say that we are going to be spending over \$130 million, and safety on our roads is our commitment that we will deliver.

CHILD CARE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. This morning I heard the minister responsible for women's issues, Dianne Cunningham, on the radio. She said a number of things, among them that all of the folks complaining about child care funding are all Toronto folks; that non-profit child care is not an issue outside Toronto; and that urban folks ought to adopt an attitude towards child care that's more in line with the small town, whatever that means.

For example—and what appalled me most, I believe—she said that she was concerned that such things as fire regulations could obstruct the use of church basements for child care. I would like to ask the minister, does he agree—because he is responsible for the Day Nurseries Act, and that of course governs child care sfandards—that fire standards are some sort of urban misconception?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): First of all, I'm not quite sure exactly what the honourable member is getting at here. Clearly what the intention of our government is right now is to increase the opportunity for child care. We have an obligation to ensure that the standards are met. That's clearly the answer.

Ms Churley: I believe it's the other way around. I don't believe that the minister understood my question. Perhaps he didn't hear his colleague on the radio this morning while she was bashing the people of Toronto who are concerned about safe and quality child care for their children when they go to work. The minister said that she didn't support, on the whole, regulated day care, that we should go back, it sounds to me, to the 1950s and that people in Toronto should do as the folks do outside of Toronto.

But I heard her say very clearly that we should be looking at fire regulations to see if we can—

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): On a point of personal privilege, Mr Speaker: I want to inform the House that at no time have I said that I do not support regulated, licensed day care—at no time—nor did I give the impression that we shouldn't have safe environments.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. Finish your supplementary, please.

Ms Churley: I think what the minister responsible for women's issues said this morning around fire is indeed to be taken very seriously. I don't think anybody in this House would want to see our children being placed in situations in basements where they could be in danger of fire.

Should this be something we see as the equivalent to bicycle helmets, where the standards only apply for persons of a certain age?

I would like to hear the minister tell us here today that he will have a chat with the minister responsible for women's issues and make sure that at the very least, whatever kind of child care we have, we can be assured that the standards that we now have in place to protect these children will be kept in place.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm sure the honourable member is sincere in her question. However, I wish she wouldn't be so selective in her facts. Anyone in this House cannot dispute the fact that our honourable member Dianne Cunningham has the best interests of children at heart, has always been fair and has the best interests of this province at heart. Clearly our government is in favour of strong standards. Our government's in favour of the welfare of children.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR POLICY

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Mr Minister, recently you announced the repeal of Bill 91. Many Ontarians know the devastating effects Bill 40 had on our economy, but not enough know the danger posed to farm operations by the son of Bill 40: Bill 91.

The need to preserve labour-intensive agricultural industry in my riding of Norfolk is critical for its social and economic vibrancy. Given that the present Bill 91, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act, exempts farm operations from strikes, some critics have been claiming that by repealing Bill 91 we are now leaving farmers out on a limb and exposed to strike action.

Minister, I ask you, can you clarify what protection

farm operations will have from strike action once Bill 91 is repealed?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): To the honourable member, Bill 91 will be repealed because that is what the agricultural community has asked us to do. It's important to note that Bill 91 allowed farm workers to organize. It did not allow strikes or lockouts, and therefore created a very, very rough situation where communications could break down and then both sides would look for a mediator.

The removal of Bill 91, being replaced by Bill 7, will guarantee no strike action on farms. It will guarantee that the crops will indeed be harvested when they're due and it will also exempt agriculture from labour relations legislation. That's what farmers want, and we are delivering.

Mr Barrett: Mr Minister, preservation of labour-intensive agricultural industry in Norfolk is based in part on harmonious labour relations. We know that unionization of the family farm does not make sense. You cannot hold a farmer by the throat and dictate labour demands while his animals are neglected or his crops rot in the field. However, Minister, criticism has been raised about health and safety of farm workers if they are not in unions. In the wake of Bill 7, what measures are in place to address health and safety in the farm workplace?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Farms—family farms and all farms—are very dangerous places in which to work. We have a Farm Safety Association which has been in place for many years and is working quite well, is providing information to both farm workers and owners of farms—family farms and what have you. All accidents are being reported. The Farm Safety Association, an independent body, continues and will continue to work hard to provide a safe workplace out in rural Ontario.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. On Tuesday, November 10, the minister inferred that the opposition did not think that agriculture was important. Obviously the minister was not listening in the House as I personally have made members' statements about the crucial contributions agriculture has made to Ontario. Again, in my throne speech response I opposed any cuts to Ontario's second-largest industry, cuts that you're poised to make. I have posed questions to the minister in letters to his office, but it seems he doesn't think agriculture is important enough to warrant an answer.

One of my first acts as co-critic to Agriculture was to request budget information and other materials, required to represent my constituents in the agricultural community, by phone and by letter. Upon receiving no response to this request, I wrote to the minister to request this same information once again. This was on August 28.

To date my office has received nothing: no information, no response, not even recognition that we were calling or bothering you.

The Speaker: The question? Put the question, please. Mr Hoy: It seems that the minister is too busy

seeking validation for the cuts which he promised he would not make. My question to the minister: Will you tell me now, before this Legislature, when I will receive this information which is vital to my riding and the agricultural community of Ontario?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I thank the honourable member for Essex-Kent for his question and his concerns, as I have concern for the agricultural community. I want to remind the honourable member we've announced that 75% of the farm tax rebate will be received by our farmers, and I signed that document about a month ago. Our safety net programs remain in place. The farm tax rebate and the safety net programs remain in place.

Yes, \$13 million in savings was found within the ministry, unused money primarily, unused money in the farm tax rebate. I want the member to know that indeed, whenever we were travelling the province of Ontario, we were advised by some 1,400 rural agricultural people as to where their priorities are and we are putting in place the suggestions that we've received from them.

Mr Hoy: My supplementary is also to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I have written on various occasions to the Minister of Environment and Energy regarding raised-bed septic tanks and received no response.

I took the lack of response to mean that the MOEE was too busy to worry about problems which affected rural Ontario, so I wrote to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on September 13. I requested that he urge his colleague to look into the matter. Here we are a month later and there has been no response from either ministry.

As rural development was one of your party's chief points, it is an affront to all rural communities that you've turned your backs on them now. You are in office on an issue that affects all of the rural development. Minister, why has your office decided that you will not answer inquiries, and you didn't answer my first question in the same regard?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: I can assure the honourable member that if he has not received an answer, he is about to receive an answer. But he has to remember that we are correcting 10 years of indifference from a Liberal and an NDP government. We are now correcting those inequities.

In conclusion, not only were these previous governments, both of them, ill advised in the spending that they did; we are now attempting to correct their overspending, as they did like drunken sailors, and we are attempting at the same time to bring confidence back to the economy.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to know what the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is going to say to a number of people who work very hard on the Great Lakes of this province and elsewhere when he refers to the cliché about sailors. Perhaps he'd like to reflect on that.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): At least sailors have been known to spend their own money.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Earlier today I rose in this House to direct a question to the Minister of Transportation. Not only am I dissatisfied with the answer given, but furthermore, I have yet to receive an answer. Therefore, I have filed the proper documentation and would appreciate an opportunity to debate further. I'm calling for a late show.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW BOARD

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege: Last week, in an answer to a question, the Minister of Community and Social Services said the following: "We need individuals on the Social Assistance Review Board who will take tough stands on welfare fraud."

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): And your point of privilege is?

Mr Silipo: My point of privilege is that I believe that constitutes interference with the workings of a quasi-judicial body. As such, I believe it impugns and it affects the privileges of every member of this House, because it diminishes our ability to be able to raise points in an impartial manner, in a manner that will be balanced. As long as it is allowed for the statements that this minister made to remain on the record and for the attitude that's behind it, which is that he can direct the work of the social assistance board, which is a quasi-judicial body, I believe that has direct implications on the responsibilities and the privileges of myself as a member of this Legislature and indeed every single member of this Legislature.

What I would like to ask you, Mr Speaker, is to look further into this matter and to come back to this House at your convenience with a ruling more particularly on this point, taking also into account the fact that our own standing rules, under section 23, while dealing with matters that are the subject of a proceeding before a tribunal or a quasi-judicial body, clearly say that any minister, indeed any member, of this House is to be called to order when dealing with matters and when making statements that "would create a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceedings."

Although there was not a specific proceeding that the minister was addressing, I believe that adds to the intent of the rules, and certainly under parliamentary convention, that a minister should not at any point interfere with the proceedings of a quasi-judicial body. I believe at the very least that's a matter of privilege that, as I said, impugns and affects negatively my privileges as a member of the House, aside from whether it constitutes a breach of any other piece of legislation which certainly I, for one, will continue to pursue.

The Speaker: Your privilege has been noted. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): On a separate matter of privilege, Mr Speaker—I would actually ask you to bear with me and perhaps be of some assistance; I've never stood on a point of privilege before and I might need your assistance in terms of how to formulate it: I feel it's important that I bring to your attention that I believe, in reviewing the record, there has

been a grave breach of the collective privilege of the membership of the Legislative Assembly. This is a matter related to an earlier point that you were asked to rule on. You did provide a ruling, but I wish to raise another issue with respect to it.

On October 3, the Minister of Community and Social Services, at page 67 of the Hansard, in response to a question placed to him by the leader of our party, responded that he "had some research done to indicate how and whether or not someone who is a sole single on benefits or a single parent with a child"—this is with respect to social assistance—how they could continue to exist. And they've actually provided a budget here. He says, "I have it here in this binder," and he went on, as I'm sure you're aware of the record, to indicate that he would make that available.

Mr Speaker, on October 4 and in the official record of Hansard at page 102, the leader of the official opposition rose on a point of order to you and she reiterated the comments of the minister from the day before and asked you to look into whether or not, given that the budget document had not been made available, that minister had misled the House yesterday.

1510

Then on October 5 you did provide a ruling on that, and that's at page 136 of the Hansard record of the day. In that, you indicated—and I know this to be a consistent ruling with previous Speakers—that you in fact have no authority to compel a minister to provide such material, and I understand that point.

On that same day, on the 5th, the leader of the official opposition clarified for you her point of order, and that can be found at the same page 136 of Hansard. In that, she indicated to you that it was not her request that you seek to compel the minister to provide the documents, but that you clarify whether or not the House had been misled. In my review of the record of Hansard since then, I'm unable to find a ruling from you on that point. I want to raise this point with you because the leader's office of our caucus has on several occasions attempted to deal, with respect to this matter, directly with the minister's office, and we on the 4th and on the 5th made phone calls. You may recall that the minister was absent and away, ill, from the House on October 4, and I think he was absent from the ministry on the 5th when we called. He was still off with doctor's orders, some might say spin doctor's orders, but doctor's orders in any event.

On the 4th when we called, we were informed that in fact staff were preparing the budget to send over and it simply awaited the minister's signature and approval of the budget that was being prepared at that point in time.

My colleague from Algoma referred earlier to Erskine May, and I won't take the time of the House to repeat that quote, but to refer you to the 21st edition and the 1963 precedent, which talked about a finding of a misleading of the House as a grave contempt of the privileges of the members of the House.

Similar to the matter of privilege that was raised earlier, I am asking you to review the record on this. I assure you we still have not received these documents

from the minister, whose quotes are very clear in the references I gave to you, that this documentation would be provided.

The information we have received from the minister's office is that the information he said was in his binder was in fact still being prepared, and here we are a week and a half, two weeks, later, and we have still not received that.

Mr Speaker, I hope I have made the points clear that I wish you to review and will look forward to hearing your response to this and to the point that was raised by the Leader of the Opposition on October 5.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): Mr Speaker, I have two motions.

I move that notwithstanding standing order 96, private members' public business not be considered until Thursday, October 26, 1995, and that the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 1 to 4, inclusive.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, not to go on at length about this, but normally the government shares copies of their motions with the opposition before they move them. I wasn't given a copy of this motion, and therefore we should either stand it down, so that proper procedures are followed, or we can table the motion and call it under orders of the day.

Hon Mr Runciman: Mr Speaker, I'm sure we can have copies provided within a minute. In fact, I'm advised they're on their way at the moment. Hopefully, that will meet the member's concerns. I apologize, Mr Speaker, for procedure not being followed.

Mr Cooke: Then I'd ask the acting government House leader to either withdraw the motion until another day or put it on the order paper—it wasn't given ahead of time—or we'll debate it.

The Speaker: Do you want to do that?

Hon Mr Runciman: Well, Mr Speaker, if the choice is debating it or withdrawing it, we will withdraw and deal with it another day. I assume, Mr Speaker—I've been handed these responsibilities today and I'm not sure if the opposition House leaders were provided with a copy of the second motion at an earlier date, so I'm looking for guidance as to whether or not I should proceed with this motion.

The Speaker: You read the motion and we will determine whether we'll accept the motion.

Hon Mr Runciman: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 8(a), the House shall meet at 1:30 pm on Thursday, October 19, 1995.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, I think the two motions are related. The motion's been moved and the motion is before the House. I'd like to just make a couple of comments on the motion. It relates to private members' hour, and I think that we haven't had a discussion in the

Legislature for quite some time on private members' hour. I think it would probably be appropriate to have a debate on it. I wasn't aware that these motions were coming forward and I think that there are a lot of things around here that need to be debated since the government doesn't seem to want to have public hearings across the province on major changes to the Labour Relations Act.

Therefore, I would move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker: Mr Cooke moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1517 to 1548.

The Speaker: Mr Cooke has moved the adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of that motion will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 74; the nays, 32.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PETITIONS

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition is from a number of people in the Niagara Peninsula. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials/employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

I affix my signature to this petition.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): "Whereas the PC government of Mike Harris, under the influence of corporate special interests, has introduced Bill 7, which would roll back rights of workers that have been achieved over several decades;

"Whereas this legislation is part of a pattern of cutting back protection for people in Ontario who don't have power or influence, including reduced welfare payments, cuts to health and safety training, a cap on pay equity wages for low-paid women, gutting of the wage protection program, a freeze on the minimum wage and lower workers' compensation benefits;

"Whereas the effects of Bill 7 would be felt in every workplace across Ontario, from Windsor to Cornwall to the Manitoba border;

"Whereas the people who will be affected by this

legislation have a natural right to be heard by MPPs before such sweeping changes are rammed through the House;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold public hearings in at least eight cities in all parts of this province and listen to why Bill 7 should be withdrawn."

I add my name.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I have today some 570 names on a petition concerning the Karla Homolka plea bargain arrangement. The petition reads as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials/employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): I have a number of petitions signed by many people:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials/employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

I've affixed my name to this petition.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): "Whereas Ontario has enjoyed an unprecedented period of labour peace under the labour reforms of the New Democratic Party government, including a record low number of days lost to strikes, an absence of the picket line violence that once marred labour relations and a boom in job-creating private investment;

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, listening only to business special interests, is pushing legislation called Bill 7 that would legalize strikebreakers and inevitably cause strife and conflict when men and women see their jobs being taken away from them;

"Whereas people in all parts of Ontario have a democratic right to be heard on the massive changes contained in Bill 7, which covers 132 pages rolling back hard-won rights of working men and women;

"Whereas the government carried out no consultation at all, except for checking with corporate lawyers and" pawnbrokers or "powerbrokers"—same thing—"maintaining total secrecy until Bill 7 was introduced in October;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to conduct full public hearings across the province on Bill 7, so that people in all parts of Ontario have a chance for their voices to be heard on this destructive and regressive legislation."

I sign my own name to this petition.

MOTORCYCLE AND SNOWMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, are of the opinion that private insurance companies are exploiting Ontario motorcyclists and snowmobile operators by charging excessive rates for coverage or by outright refusing to provide coverage;

"Whereas we, the undersigned, understand that those insurance companies that do specialize in motorcycle insurance will only insure riders with four or more years of riding experience and are outright refusing to insure riders who drive certain models of 'supersport' bikes; and

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that this situation will cost hundreds of jobs at dealerships and the motorcycle industry and is contrary to the rights of motorcyclists and snowmobile operators;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario should study the feasibility of launching public motorcycle and snowmobile insurance."

I have affixed my signature to this petition.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Windsor-Walkerville. I call on the member for Windsor-Walkerville. He's up three times now. Does he have a petition?

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): It's Port Arthur, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Oh, I'm sorry. Port Arthur.

CHILD CARE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): The very proud member for Port Arthur, Mr Speaker, has a petition signed by a number of early childhood educators in Thunder Bay and a number of concerned parents in relation to cutbacks. They've asked that the Conservative government, through the Legislative Assembly, stop the funding cutbacks that will affect the availability of professionally run child care programs, resource centres and services for children with special needs.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Stuart Deans of Ottawa joins Glenn Rothwell, who's from Smiths Falls, and 10 other very concerned citizens in petitioning the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in the following manner:

"Whereas the people of Ontario have a fundamental right to have their voices heard on legislation that could make this province a less attractive place to work, live and invest;

"Whereas the Mike Harris government drafted its Bill 7, stripping workers of their rights, without any public consultation whatsoever, listening only to the special"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Mr Pouliot: Could we quiet the jackals, Mr Speaker, or must I start over?

—"listening only to the special interests who favour lower wages and are against empowering workers;

"Whereas travelling public hearings across the province would give all Ontarians, both union and non-union, a chance to explain to the government why Bill 7 threatens the labour peace our province has enjoyed in recent years, especially since the New Democratic government," ourselves, "outlawed strikebreakers;

"Whereas there is no good reason to rush this rightwing, American-style labour law through Parliament without listening to the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned," the dozen very concerned citizens who see themselves under a state of seige, "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the PC government to have public hearings in communities province-wide, and then either withdraw Bill 7 or bring in amendments to make the legislation fair and balanced" for the workers of Ontario.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I have a petition signed by a number of people who are very concerned about justice in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials/employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka, and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

I add my name to this petition.

1600

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I also have a petition signed by several individuals from Ottawa to Mississauga, Kitchener, Smiths Falls and various other places in the province, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas labour legislation from the Conservative government, Bill 7, would strip public sector workers of successor rights, meaning that workers whose jobs are privatized could either lose their jobs or be cut back to the minimum wage;

"Whereas Bill 7 would also make a mockery of the essential services provisions of the existing law, by allowing the Mike Harris government to use strikebreakers to perform any work in the Ontario public service, regardless of provisions in an essential services agreement;

"Whereas many workers who are currently union members would have their union rights taken away by Bill 7, without any opportunity to vote on whether or not they wanted to remain in a union;

"Whereas this legislation will affect Ontario public service employees in communities all across the province who have had no opportunity to have their voice heard in the drafting of this bill;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to conduct public hearings, including evening sessions, in communities across the province,

with a full opportunity for participation by public sector workers who would be hurt by this law."

I've affixed my signature to this petition.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the PC government of Mike Harris, under the influence of the corporate special interests, has introduced Bill 7, which would roll back rights of workers that have been achieved over several decades;

"Whereas this legislation is part of a pattern of cutting back protection for people in Ontario who don't have power or influence, including reduced welfare payments, cuts to health and safety training, a cap on pay equity wages for low-paid women, gutting the wage protection program, a freeze on a minimum wage and lower workers' compensation benefits;

"Whereas the effects of Bill 7 would be felt in every workplace across Ontario, from Windsor to Cornwall" to Kapuskasing "to the Manitoba border;

"Whereas the people who will be affected by this legislation have a natural right to be heard by MPPs before such sweeping changes are rammed through the House;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold public hearings in at least eight cities in all parts of this province and listen to why Bill 7 should be withdrawn."

I've affixed my name to the petition.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): Mr Speaker, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris Common Sense Revolution campaign document said 'not a penny' of health care funding will be touched;

"Whereas the Common Sense Revolution said, 'We will not cut health care spending, it is far too important';

"Whereas the Common Sense Revolution said, 'There will be no new user fees';

"Whereas the first financial activity of the Harris government has been to actually cut \$130 million from the health budget;

"Whereas the Harris government has announced they are actively considering new user fees;

"We, the undersigned, demand a public apology from the Harris government for breaking their election promise on health care and putting our treasured health care system at risk by cutting health spending by \$130 million."

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a petition signed by 10 very concerned resident of the province of Ontario, ranging from Ottawa to Toronto and to Windsor. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario has enjoyed an unprecedented period of labour peace under the labour reforms of the New Democratic Party government, including a record low number of days lost to strikes, an absence of the picket line violence that once marred labour relations and a boom in job-creating private investment; "Whereas the Mike Harris government, listening only to business special interests, is pushing legislation called Bill 7 that would legalize strikebreakers and inevitably cause strife and conflict when men and women see their jobs being taken away from them;

"Whereas people in all parts of Ontario have a democratic right to be heard on the massive changes contained in Bill 7, which covers 132 pages rolling back hard-won rights of working men and working women;

"Whereas the government carried out no consultation at all, except for checking with corporate lawyers and powerbrokers" and pawnbrokers, "maintaining total secrecy until Bill 7 was introduced in October;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to conduct full public hearings across the province on Bill 7, so that all people in all parts of Ontario have a chance for their voice to be heard on this destructive and regressive legislation."

I agree entirely with the petitioners and I have signed my name to this petition.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of Ontario have a fundamental right to have their voices heard on legislation that would make this province a less attractive place to work, live and invest;

"Whereas the Mike Harris government drafted its Bill 7, stripping workers of their rights, without any public consultation whatsoever, listening only to the special interests who favour lower wages and are against empowering workers;

"Whereas travelling public hearings across the province would give all Ontarians, both union and non-union, a chance to explain to the government why Bill 7 threatens the labour peace our province has enjoyed in recent years, especially since the New Democratic government outlawed strikebreakers;

"Whereas there is no good reason to rush this rightwing, American-style labour law through Parliament without listening to the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the PC government to have public hearings in communities province-wide and then either withdraw Bill 7 or bring in amendments to make the legislation fair and balanced."

I affix my signature to this petition.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

AN ACT RESPECTING
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INQUIRY INTO
THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
TO THE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT

Mr Christopherson moved first reading of the following bill:

An Act respecting the establishment of an inquiry into the effect of the proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act: on employment and, in particular, employment opportunities for women, racial minorities, persons with disabilities, native people, youth and workers over the age of 45; on investment and, in particular, invest-

ment in new plants or the retrofit of existing plants; on entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial environment; on competitiveness and, in particular, the competitive tax position of Ontario companies; on productivity and, in particular, the potential for lost time due to strikes, lockouts, layoffs and complete or partial plant closures in the crude petroleum and natural gas industry; the furniture and fixtures industries, including the wooden household furniture industry, the upholstered household furniture industry, the office furniture industry, the bedspring and mattress industry and the hotel, restaurant and institutional furniture and fixture industry; the printing, publishing and allied industries, including the commercial printing industry, the business form industry, the platemaking, typesetting and binding industry—does this all sound familiar over there?—the book publishing industry and the newspaper, magazine and periodical combined publishing and printing industry; and the electrical and electronic products industries, including the small electric appliance industry, the major electronic appliance industry, the lighting fixture industry, the electric lamp and shade industry, the record player, radio and television industry, the telecommunications equipment industry, the electronic parts and components industry, the electronic computing and peripheral employment industry, the electronic office, store and business machine industry; the wood industries, including the shingles and shakes industry, the sawmill and planing mill products industry, the veneer and plywood industry, the prefabricated wooden building industry, the wooden kitchen cabinet and bathroom vanity industry, the wood preservation industry, the particleboard industry and the waferboard industry; the leather and allied products industry, including leather tanneries, the footwear industry and the luggage, purse and handbag industry; the textile products industries, including the carpet, mat and rug industry, the canvas and related products industry, the household products of textile materials industry and the tire cord fabric industry, the sweater industry; the food, beverage, drug retail industries, including grocery stores, specialty food stores, liquor stores, sin stores, beer stores, pharmacies and patent medicine and toiletries; the transportation industry, including the scheduled air transportation industry, the airport operations industry, the aircraft rental industry, the aircraft servicing industry, service industries incidental to railway transportation, the freight and passenger water transport industry, the ferry industry, the main towing industry, the ship chartering industry, the marine cargo handling industry, the harbour and port operation industries that operate in the greater Toronto area, including the regions of York, Toronto, Peel and Mississauga, including the cities and towns of Mississauga, Brampton, Toronto, Bolton, Orangeville, Caledon, Woodbridge, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Newmarket, Aurora, Markham and Sutton.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Mr Speaker, if I may, a comment in introducing this new

I would point out— Interjections.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture,

Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): He is going to ask for brief

Mr Christopherson: Oh, I'm sorry. Okay.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): No, I've two copies of the same act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It'll be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1620 to 1625.

The Speaker: Will the members take their seats, please. The member for Cambridge will please take his

Mr Christopherson has moved the motion of the bill. All those in favour, please rise one by one.

Aves

Bartolucci, Rick Boyd, Marion Bradley, James J. Brown, Michael A. Caplan, Elinor Castrilli, Annamarie Christopherson, David Kwinter, Monte Churley, Marilyn Colle, Mike Cooke, David S. Crozier, Bruce

Curling, Alvin Duncan, Dwight Gerretsen, John Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hoy, Pat Lalonde, Jean-Marc Lankin, Frances Laughren, Floyd Marchese, Rosario

Martel, Shelley McGuinty, Dalton Morin, Gilles E. Patten, Richard Phillips, Gerry Pouliot, Gilles Pupatello, Sandra Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony Wildman, Bud

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one by one.

Arnott, Ted Baird, John R. Barrett, Toby Bassett, Isabel Beaubien, Marcel Boushy, Dave Brown, Jim Carr, Gary Carroll, Jack Chudleigh, Ted Clement, Tony Cunningham, Dianne Danford, Harry DeFaria, Carl Doyle, Ed Ecker, Janet Fisher, Barb Flaherty, Jim Ford, Douglas B. Fox, Gary Froese, Tom Galt, Doug Gilchrist, Steve Grimmett, Bill

Navs Guzzo, Garry J. Hardeman, Ernie Harnick, Charles Hastings, John Hodgson, Chris Hudak, Tim Jackson, Cameron Johns, Helen Johnson, Bert Johnson, Ron Jordan, Leo Kells, Morley Klees, Frank F. Leach, Al Leadston, Gary L. Marland, Margaret Martiniuk, Gerry Maves, Bart Munro, Julia Mushinski, Marilyn Newman, Dan O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Palladini, Al

Parker, John L. Pettit, Trevor Preston, Peter Rollins, E.J. Douglas Ross, Lillian Sampson, Rob Shea, Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Skarica, Toni Smith, Bruce Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Sterling, Norman W. Stewart, R. Gary Tascona, Joseph N. Tilson, David Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wood, Bob Young, Terence H.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 32, the nays 70.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Further introduction of bills.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Mr Cooke has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it—

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Point of order.

The Speaker: No, Mr Cooke has moved the adjournment of the House. You can't have a point of order on that.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1630 to 1700.

The Speaker: Will the members take their seats, please? Order.

Mr Cooke has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until they're all counted.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 25, the nays 74.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

DROP THE PENNY ACT, 1995

Mr Tilson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, the Drop the Penny Act.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1704 to 1709.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time.

Arnott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bartolucci, Rick
Bassett, Isabel
Beaubien, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Boyd, Marion
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Jim
Caplan, Elinor

Ayes
Gerretsen, John
Gilchrist, Steve
Gravelle, Michael
Grimmett, Bill
Guzzo, Garry J.
Hardeman, Ernie
Harnick, Charles
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hoy, Pat
Hudak, Tim

Palladini, Al
Parker, John L.
Patten, Richard
Pettit, Trevor
Phillips, Gerry
Pouliot, Gilles
Preston, Peter
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramsay, David
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Ross, Lillian

Carr, Gary Carroll, Jack Castrilli, Annamarie Chiarelli, Robert Christopherson, David Chudleigh, Ted Churley, Marilyn Clement, Tony Colle, Mike Cooke, David S. Crozier, Bruce Cunningham, Dianne Danford, Harry DeFaria, Carl Doyle, Ed Duncan, Dwight Ecker, Janet Fisher, Barb Flaherty, Jim Ford, Douglas B. Fox, Gary Froese, Tom Galt, Doug

Jackson, Cameron Johns, Helen Johnson, Bert Johnson, Ron Jordan, Leo Kells, Morley Klees, Frank F. Kwinter, Monte Lalonde, Jean-Marc Lankin, Frances Laughren, Floyd Leadston, Gary L. Marchese, Rosario Marland, Margaret Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony Martiniuk, Gerry Maves, Bart Munro, Julia Mushinski, Marilyn Newman, Dan O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J.

Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Sergio, Mario Shea, Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Silipo, Tony Skarica, Toni Smith, Bruce Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Sterling, Norman W. Stewart, R. Gary Tascona, Joseph N. Tilson, David Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wildman, Bud Wood, Bob Wood, Len Young, Terence H.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 101; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): Mr Speaker, I think one of the things we have all agreed about in the last number of years is the amount of bureaucracy that business people across this province have had to encounter. It's a simple matter with respect to the penny, I think, the issuing of change, simply the weighing down of our pockets with change.

We believe this bill will save on transactions, it will do away with bureaucracy, it will make good sense. As well, it costs about two cents to make each penny.

The purpose of this bill is to create a new business practice respecting cash transactions by requiring cash amounts for goods and services to be rounded up or down to the nearest multiple of five cents. Persons owed money are required to round the total amount owing in each cash transaction, including all taxes, to the nearest multiple of five cents. Transactions with financial institutions are exempted from the requirement.

The Speaker: I think you've-

Mr Tilson: Mr Speaker, if I could just finish a couple more comments, I would make it quite clear that persons who notify the public, by posting a sign or otherwise, that they do not round out cash amounts are exempted from the requirement.

The Speaker: The time for introduction of bills has expired.

Mr Cooke, is it a point of privilege?

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): No. Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member was not in order. My understanding is that in order to get the floor, you have to have either a point of privilege or a point of order, and

you had neither one. You got up on another motion to move the adjournment of the House, which in my understanding is incorrect.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, if I might, I didn't call for a point of order, I didn't call for a point of privilege; you recognized me because I was standing. I didn't ask for a point of order, I didn't ask for a point of privilege; you recognized me, as I was standing. Therefore, under any other circumstance, if I'd called "point of order" or called "point of privilege," I think you would be correct. But you recognized me as a member. I specifically did not say anything, and therefore I believe the motion—

The Speaker: I recognized you on either a point of order or a point of privilege.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, I did not call for a point of order or a point of privilege. I understand the point you're making, but, Mr Speaker, you recognized me and I moved the motion to adjourn the House, and I believe the motion is in order—

The Speaker: Would the member take his seat, please. I'd like to inform the member that the motion to adjourn is not in order. This is my instructions, and I will now call for—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Are you challenging the Speaker's ruling?

Mr Cooke: No, I'm not. If I could, I would, but the rules have been changed and I can't.

Mr Speaker, I have grave concern about what you just said, and that is that you said you have your instructions. Now, Mr Speaker, I think that is clearly on record and that you said that. I think that is a very serious issue, for the Speaker to indicate that you made a ruling that I disagree with and say: "I'm sorry, your motion is out of order. I have my instructions." Now, what did you mean by that, Mr Speaker? I think that's a very serious thing for a Speaker to say.

The Speaker: I have ruled that the member does not have a point of order.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): We will now proceed with the divisions and we now will proceed with the vote, a deferred vote on the amendment to the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session. We'll have a five-minute bell to call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1719 to 1724.

The Speaker: All members take their seats, please.

The first question to be decided is Mr Rae's amendment to the amendment to the motion. All those in favour of Mr Rae's amendment to the amendment to the motion will please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick Boyd, Marion Bradley, James J. Brown, Michael A. Gerretsen, John Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hoy, Pat

Morin, Gilles E. Patten, Richard Phillips, Gerry Pouliot, Gilles Caplan, Elinor
Castrilli, Annamarie
Christopherson, David
Churley, Marilyn
Colle, Mike
Cooke, David S.
Crozier, Bruce
Duncan, Dwight

Kwinter, Monte Lalonde, Jean-Marc Lankin, Frances Laughren, Floyd Marchese, Rosario Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony McLeod, Lyn Pupatello, Sandra Ramsay, David Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony Wildman, Bud Wood, Len

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise.

Nays

Arnott, Ted Harnick, Charles Baird, John R. Harris, Michael D. Barrett, Toby Hastings, John Bassett, Isabel Hudak, Tim Beaubien, Marcel Jackson, Cameron Boushy, Dave Johns, Helen Brown, Jim Johnson, Bert Carr, Gary Johnson, Dave Carroll, Jack Johnson, Ron Chudleigh, Ted Jordan, Leo Clement, Tony Kells, Morley Cunningham, Dianne Klees, Frank F. Danford, Harry Leach, Al DeFaria, Carl Leadston, Gary L. Dovle, Ed Marland, Margaret Ecker, Janet Martiniuk, Gerry Fisher, Barb Maves, Bart Flaherty, Jim Munro, Julia Ford, Douglas B. Mushinski, Marilyn Fox, Gary Newman, Dan Froese, Tom O'Toole, John Galt, Doug Ouellette, Jerry J. Gilchrist, Steve Palladini, Al Grimmett, Bill Parker, John L. Guzzo, Garry J. Pettit, Trevor Hardeman, Ernie Preston, Peter

Rollins, E.J. Douglas Ross, Lillian Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Saunderson, William Shea, Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Skarica, Toni Smith, Bruce Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Sterling, Norman W. Stewart, R. Gary Tascona, Joseph N. Tilson, David Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Vankoughnet, Bill Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wilson, Jim Witmer, Elizabeth Wood, Bob Young, Terence H.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 34; the nays, 76.

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment to the motion lost.

The next question to be decided is Mrs McLeod's amendment to the motion.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick Gerretsen, John Boyd, Marion Gravelle, Michael Bradley, James J. Hampton, Howard Brown, Michael A. Hoy, Pat Caplan, Elinor Kwinter, Monte Castrilli, Annamarie Lalonde, Jean-Marc Christopherson, David Lankin, Frances Churley, Marilyn Laughren, Floyd Colle, Mike Marchese, Rosario Cooke, David S. Martel, Shelley Crozier, Bruce Martin, Tony Duncan, Dwight McLeod, Lyn

Morin, Gilles E. Patten, Richard Phillips, Gerry Pouliot, Gilles Pupatello, Sandra Ramsay, David Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony Wildman, Bud Wood, Len

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise.

Arnott, Ted Baird, John R. Barrett, Toby Bassett, Isabel Beaubien, Marcel Boushy, Dave Brown, Jim Carr, Gary Carroll, Jack Chudleigh, Ted Clement, Tony Cunningham, Dianne Danford, Harry DeFaria, Carl Doyle, Ed Ecker, Janet Fisher, Barb Flaherty, Jim Ford, Douglas B. Fox, Gary Froese, Tom Galt, Doug Gilchrist, Steve Grimmett, Bill Guzzo, Garry J. Hardeman, Ernie

Nays
Harnick, Charles
Harris, Michael D.
Hastings, John
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Johnson, Dave
Johnson, Ron

Johns, Helen Johnson, Bert Johnson, Dave Johnson, Ron Jordan, Leo Kells, Morley Klees, Frank F. Leach, Al Leadston, Gary L. Marland, Margaret Martiniuk, Gerry Maves, Bart Munro, Julia Mushinski, Marilyn Newman, Dan O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J.

Rollins, E.J. Douglas Ross, Lillian Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Saunderson, William Shea, Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Skarica, Toni Smith, Bruce Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Sterling, Norman W. Stewart, R. Gary Tascona, Joseph N. Tilson, David Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Vankoughnet, Bill Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wilson, Jim Witmer, Elizabeth Wood, Bob

Young, Terence H.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 34; the nays, 76. 1730

Palladini, Al

Parker, John L.

Pettit, Trevor

Preston, Peter

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the motion lost.

We will now come to the motion of Mrs Fisher. All those in support of the motion of Mrs Fisher will please rise one at a time to be recognized by the clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted Baird, John R. Barrett, Toby Bassett, Isabel Beaubien, Marcel Boushy, Dave Brown, Jim Carr, Gary Carroll, Jack Chudleigh, Ted Clement, Tony Cunningham, Dianne Danford, Harry DeFaria, Carl Doyle, Ed Ecker, Janet Fisher, Barb Flaherty, Jim Ford, Douglas B. Fox, Gary Froese, Tom Galt, Doug Gilchrist, Steve Grimmett, Bill Guzzo, Garry J. Hardeman, Ernie

Harnick, Charles Harris, Michael D. Hastings, John Hudak, Tim Jackson, Cameron Johns, Helen Johnson, Bert Johnson, Dave Johnson, Ron Jordan, Leo Kells, Morley Klees, Frank F. Leach, Al Leadston, Gary L. Marland, Margaret Martiniuk, Gerry Maves, Bart Munro, Julia Mushinski, Marilyn Newman, Dan O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Palladini, Al Parker, John L. Pettit, Trevor Preston, Peter

Rollins, E.J. Douglas Ross, Lillian Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Saunderson, William Shea, Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Skarica, Toni Smith, Bruce Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Sterling, Norman W. Stewart, R. Gary Tascona, Joseph N. Tilson, David Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Vankoughnet, Bill Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wilson, Jim Witmer, Elizabeth Wood, Bob Young, Terence H.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time to be recognized by the clerk.

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick
Boyd, Marion
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Caplan, Elinor
Castrilli, Annamarie
Christopherson, David
Churley, Marilyn
Colle, Mike
Cooke, David S.
Crozier, Bruce
Duncan, Dwight

Gerretsen, John Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hoy, Pat Kwinter, Monte Lalonde, Jean-Marc Lankin, Frances Laughren, Floyd Marchese, Rosario Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony McLeod, Lyn Morin, Gilles E.
Patten, Richard
Phillips, Gerry
Pouliot, Gilles
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramsay, David
Sergio, Mario
Silipo, Tony
Wildman, Bud
Wood, Len

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 76; the nays, 34. The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It is therefore resolved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable Henry Newton Rowell Jackman, a Member of the Order of Canada, Knight in the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, doctor of laws, bachelor of laws, bachelor of arts, Honorary Colonel of the Governor General's Horse Guards, Honorary Colonel of 429 Squadron at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Honorary Captain of the Fifth Canadian Maritime Operations Group at Halifax, Nova Scotia, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): As previously agreed to, there is a deferred vote on opposition day motion number 1 by Mrs McLeod. There will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1738 to 1743.

The Speaker: Would the members take their seats, please.

We're dealing with the motion in Mrs McLeod's name. Would the members in favour rise one by one.

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick
Boyd, Marion
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Caplan, Elinor
Castrilli, Annamarie
Christopherson, David
Churley, Marilyn
Colle, Mike
Cooke, David S.
Crozier, Bruce
Curling, Alvin

Duncan, Dwight Gerretsen, John Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hoy, Pat Kwinter, Monte Lalonde, Jean-Marc Lankin, Frances Laughren, Floyd Marchese, Rosario Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony McGuinty, Dalton McLeod, Lyn Morin, Gilles E. Patten, Richard Phillips, Gerry Pouliot, Gilles Pupatello, Sandra Ramsay, David Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony Wildman, Bud Wood, Len **The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one by one.

Nays Arnott, Ted Harnick, Charles Preston, Peter Baird, John R. Harris, Michael D. Rollins, E.J. Douglas Barrett, Toby Hastings, John Ross, Lillian Bassett, Isabel Hodgson, Chris Runciman, Bob Beaubien, Marcel Hudak, Tim Sampson, Rob Boushy, Dave Jackson, Cameron Saunderson, William Brown, Jim Johns, Helen Shea, Derwyn Carr, Gary Johnson, Bert Sheehan, Frank Carroll, Jack Johnson, Dave Skarica, Toni Chudleigh, Ted Johnson, Ron Smith, Bruce Clement, Tony Jordan, Leo Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Cunningham, Dianne Kells, Morley Danford, Harry Klees, Frank F. Sterling, Norman W. DeFaria, Carl Leach, Al Stewart, R. Gary Ecker, Janet Leadston, Gary L. Tascona, Joseph N. Elliott, Brenda Tilson, David Marland, Margaret Tsubouchi, David H. Fisher, Barb Martiniuk, Gerry Flaherty, Jim Maves, Bart Turnbull, David Ford, Douglas B. Munro, Julia Vankoughnet, Bill Mushinski, Marilyn Villeneuve, Noble Fox, Gary Wettlaufer, Wayne Froese, Tom Newman, Dan Galt, Doug O'Toole, John Wilson, Jim Gilchrist, Steve Ouellette, Jerry J. Witmer, Elizabeth Palladini, Al Wood, Bob Grimmett, Bill Parker, John L. Young, Terence H. Guzzo, Garry J. Hardeman, Ernie Pettit, Trevor

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 36; the nays, 77.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller): Fifth order: second reading, Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): Mr Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Point of order, the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Mr Speaker, I move An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations—

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mrs Witmer: —and to promote economic prosperity—

The Speaker: Order. I've recognized the member for Waterloo North, but we have a point of order?

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Yes. Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Under standing order VII, section 22(1)(b), I'd like to move that the member for Windsor-Riverside who had risen in his speech be now heard.

The Speaker: Order. My understanding is the member for Windsor-Riverside is out of order at this time.

The member for Waterloo North.

Ms Lankin: Mr Speaker, I'm not sure-you'll have

to explain to me in terms of the procedure that's allowed here. I understand that there's no challenge to the Chair's ruling, but I'm wondering if you could explain.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Beaches-Woodbine on a point of order.

Ms Lankin: I am wondering if you could explain the reasons for your ruling. As I read section VII, 22(1)(b), it says, "When two or more members rise to speak, the Speaker shall call upon the member who, in the Speaker's opinion, rose first in his or her place." I understand that in your opinion the member from Waterloo rose first. However, it goes on to say that no debate is permitted on your decision, which I understand, "but a motion may be made by any member," that member being myself at this time, that the member who had risen at the same time, that being the member for Windsor-Riverside, "be now heard" or "do now speak."

As I understand it, that is a motion that is in order, it's a motion that is non-debatable and it's a motion that should be put to the vote of the House.

The Speaker: It may be a motion that's in order at another time, but this motion on the orders of the day is the one on the floor, and that's the one that we will deal with.

1750

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Could you just help us out here in telling us exactly, when you say the motion would be in order at another time, when in fact there are two members who stand at the same time, how it would be appropriate at another time? Mr Speaker, I think it's inappropriate—

The Speaker: Order. I have called order.

Interjections.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, if you're going to have peace in this House you're going to have to give at least an explanation—

Interjections.

Mr Cooke: You owe that to the opposition; there's 82 of them and—

The Speaker: Would the member take his seat, please.

Mr Cooke: I'm asking for an explanation.

The Speaker: I have recognized the member for Waterloo North first.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, it's not enough if you simply say—

The Speaker: No.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Only a minister might have the floor at this time to move the motion which I recognized, and that has happened. I would call on the Minister of Labour to proceed with orders of the day.

The member for Lake Nipigon has a point of order.

M. Gilles Pouliot (Lac-Nipigon): Avec respect j'aimerais, Monsieur le Président, tirer votre attention sur le Règlement des débats.

Vous serez sans doute au courant que ces règlements, au fil des ans, ont été mis sur pied afin de ne pas placer les membres de l'opposition, dans ce cas des deux partis, dans un état de siège. Or mon collègue, notre leader parlementaire, s'est chargé de vous rappeler précisément les lois gouvernant les débats sur l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Moi-même, j'ai été surpris, habitué en quelques années à écouter méticuleusement, à ne jamais interrompre et surtout à donner une chance dans notre démocratie aux partis de l'opposition.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: There can't be a point of order when there's no motion on the floor.

Mr Pouliot: Mr Speaker, with great respect, I'm seeking a clarification on the rules of debate. I think you will find this on page 14 of the standing orders. All members have been the recipient of the standing orders. I await your clarification and I thank you, Monsieur le Président.

The Speaker: The member does not have a point of order. We're now into debate, orders of the day.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): I'm sorry that the member for Carleton is so upset about the members of the opposition attempting—

Hon Mr Sterling: Well, you're out of order, you know.

The Speaker: Order. My understanding is that you cannot move a point of privilege or a point of order until we get into debate, and we have not started the debate yet. We are moving points of order and points of privilege before we're into debate. So I recognize the member for Waterloo North.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity.

This legislation is designed to bring about positive changes in our economy, create jobs and introduce democracy to the workforce.

The Speaker: Order. Would the member for Waterloo North take her seat, please. The member for Rainy River.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe a point of order can be brought at any time in this House, that there is any time at which a point of order may be brought because these rules state the orders of this House and these rules can be raised and brought before you at any time. That is my point of order, Mr Speaker. I believe that all of us, as members, have the capacity to raise with you where and when and whether and how these orders apply to the House

So I have a bit of difficulty understanding how I, as a member of this House who is to obey the rules of this House, can only raise orders at a certain point of time. I believe I can raise a point of order at any time in the proceedings of the House.

The first question I have, which is the substance of my point of order, is, I believe a point of order can be raised at any time.

My second point is, I'm simply referring to the clear language that is written on page 16 of the rules of order. Page 16 says that when a member rises and puts a motion that a member be now heard, that member "do now speak"; that is not a debatable motion.

That's my only point. It seems to me that the clear language of the rules is there. If the clear words do not mean what they say, I would ask you for an explanation then of what they do mean. If we cannot rely upon the clear meaning of words in the English language, then I think we need an explanation in this House as to what they do mean.

The Speaker: I haven't heard what your point of order is, so I'll ask the member to proceed.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With respect, as a member who has served in this House for some 20 years, I do not understand how you can rule that a member cannot raise a point of order to deal with the rules of the House. You are telling us that it is not in order to raise a point of order at this time. Would you please explain when it is.

Mr Cooke: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I guess one of the concerns that I have and I think that members are expressing frustration about is that when you make a ruling on a particular point of order that any of us raises—and you know, you've been here long enough to know that there will be points of order many times. I get a kick out of the angst that's being expressed by some members of the Conservative Party. They wrote the rules on how to disrupt this place in the last five years.

Hon Mr Sterling: Because you're out of order. **The Speaker:** Order.

Mr Cooke: We saw them, the bills that were introduced all the afternoon in the name of Mr Harris, so don't lecture us.

Mr Speaker, when you give a ruling in the House, I think it is appropriate that you give a full explanation of why you are giving a particular ruling. The concern that all of us have this afternoon is why you've given this particular ruling when the rule says very clearly that, "When two or more members rise to speak, the Speaker shall call upon the member who, in the Speaker's opinion, rose first in his or her place; no debate is permitted on the Speaker's decision, but a motion may be made that any member who has risen 'be now heard' or 'do now speak.'"

Your response was simply—

The Speaker: Order. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Editadii Matti / Matta	of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)		for women's issues / ministre des Affaires
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Chair of the		intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la
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Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Mipissing	President of the Executive Council / premier
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Chris (PC)		ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
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D 4	leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K. (PC) Speaker /
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Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Health /
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Ct A - draw Ct Datrials	francophones		General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre déléqué aux Affaires
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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.







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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 17 October 1995

Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36º législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 17 octobre 1995



Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 17 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 17 octobre 1995

The House met at 1331. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DISABLED CHILDREN'S HOCKEY

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): On Saturday, October 14, it was my pleasure to attend the inauguration of the Canadian Hockey Association for the Developmentally Challenged. This hockey association will provide children with the opportunity to develop, to their fullest ability, their love of the game of hockey. By tapping into their learning potential through hockey, these children will come to recognize that the only real handicap is that which others put on them.

The first game between the red and black teams on Saturday demonstrated the valuable contribution of promoting the full acceptance and participation of children who are developmentally handicapped or challenged in our community.

This House should applaud the officers and committee members for their unselfish dedication; in particular, the president of the association, Mr Adriano Salvati. Also to be commended are the volunteers and parents for their support. But most of all we should praise the efforts of these children for accepting the challenge of sports participation.

I'm sure that all members of this House join me today in relaying the message that we, as a community, take pride in this significant accomplishment.

CLOSURE OF ONTARIO WELCOME HOUSE

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): This is the first of a series of reports which I intend to make to describe the devastation that the cuts of this government are having in my constituency of Fort York.

Over the years, my riding has been the first home for hundreds of thousands of new Canadians. In any school in Fort York as many as 25 to 30 languages would be spoken.

Today, over 100 demonstrators gathered together to protest the closing of Ontario Welcome House. Since 1973, when the Davis government established Ontario welcome houses, they've acted as a networking service for new immigrants, helping to fill out forms, referring to the appropriate agencies, finding employment, offering counselling, and offering translation and English classes. For 22 years, in 35 languages, this agency has eased the settlement process and helped to make sure that the energy of new Canadians is captured and channelled into productive lives.

The governments of Japan, Germany, Australia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia and Sweden have all sent delegations to Welcome House to understand how Canada settles people successfully.

In April, these centres will be closed because this government has decided that this investment in people is a luxury. Fifty-four staff members will be out on the street searching for work, along with those they used to be able to help.

Some 80,000 of Canada's 250,000 immigrants settle in Toronto each year. Of these 80,000, 63,000, predominantly non-English speaking, rely on welcome houses. We cannot make savings by making it more difficult for new Canadians to access services, employment or their legal rights.

In closing welcome houses, we have an example of, "If it's working, destroy it."

BICYCLE SAFETY

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Honourable Al Palladini, Minister of Transportation, on his recent announcement regarding Ontario's new bicycle helmet law.

Effective October 1, the completed regulations for Bill 124 state that the law which makes wearing a helmet mandatory in Ontario applies only to cyclists under 18 years of age. In my opinion, which is in keeping with the opinion of many residents from Grey-Owen Sound who took time to write or phone my office, the regulations make common sense.

Make no mistake about it: I am concerned with the issue of bicycle safety. However, although I believe that adults should show leadership and set a positive example for our youth by wearing helmets, I don't believe we need new laws to force this type of responsibility. As adults, we should always be positive role models for our children and we should have the capacity to make responsible safety choices for ourselves.

In addition to helmets, preparing young people to ride safely and avoid unnecessary mishaps is vital. In this field, the municipal police services in my riding have proved to be exemplary. Owen Sound, Hanover, Meaford, Thornbury and Durham do an outstanding job promoting bicycle safety through annual bike rodeos and safety seminars.

It is this type of cooperative community effort combined with the new bicycle helmet law that will allow our children to enjoy years of accident-free cycling in our communities.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I rise today to bring to the attention of this House a very serious matter. As reported in both the Ottawa Sun and the Citizen today, officials from the Ministry of Health stated last night at a meeting of the district health council, and in a letter from the ministry, that "the ministry will establish

a management team...that will institute a separate process and structure for the next phase of the reconfiguration report."

This council has been meeting and advising the government for the past two years on the hospital reconfiguration project. The region was to release its recommendations in January. You can imagine the confusion that this has caused on such an important regional issue.

In discussion today with the chair of the district health council, Dr Soucie, he stated: "People felt shafted. Thousands of professional and volunteer hours have gone into the planning process. This has undercut our credibility."

To add further fuel to the fire, I understand that the Minister of Health stated this morning that he was not aware of this action by his own bureaucrats and was sending out a letter of apology, as he said, on behalf of his officials "who acted unilaterally, without my knowledge or consent."

If the minister is not aware of what is happening in his own ministry, then who the heck is? The issue here is very simple: Who is in charge? This is the second time the minister has admitted to being blindsided by his ministry staff, who have had their own course which the minister finds out about after the fact.

The confusion has to end. I call on the minister to investigate this matter and report back to the House. He must act decisively to restore the confidence, hard work and reputation of the district health council. I look forward to hearing his response.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): In August of this year, representatives of the community of Marathon in my riding, that of Lake Nipigon, met with the Minister of Health to alert him to the fact that the medical infrastructure of northwestern Ontario is indeed in danger of collapsing.

The longstanding issue—and this is a perennial, a residual—of doctor recruitment and retaining for the north continues to plague our communities.

In the case of Marathon, with only one full-time doctor, there's been an announcement by the Wilson Memorial hospital that, because they have no alternative, effective November 10 this year, in a few weeks, they will close their emergency service. How can one full-time doctor service more than 10,000 people at the regional level?

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If it does happen, if this calamity, this catastrophe, because of really what is the lack of concerted effort, is allowed to happen, we people up north in our special part of Ontario have no alternatives and we shall be left holding the bag.

We've established a fund. We passed the hat around and we raised \$15,000 so we can keep locums. That has been insufficient. So we beg the minister, because there's a human dimension to this, to please give us the opportunity to keep our emergency department open.

OPENING OF LIBRARIES

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): We're most fortunate in the riding of Northumberland to have recently opened two new libraries in the towns of Campbellford and Cobourg.

Libraries are indeed an important resource for any community. They are an essential monument to our past, and new libraries are a vote of confidence in our future. They are a symbol of what we hold important in our society: knowledge, education, and the sharing of ideas and information.

Although the library of today incorporates computers and high technology, the purpose hasn't changed very much over the years. Libraries are still places of learning, and of fun, as our two new libraries have clearly shown.

Both libraries in my riding are bright, open and inviting. They are high tech with computers, a large selection of videotapes, talking books, and much more.

I was particularly pleased to have the Honourable Marilyn Mushinski assist with the recent opening of the library in Cobourg. The library in Campbellford was opened by local elected municipal politicians.

The development of facilities such as libraries represents large quantities of time by volunteers. A big thank you and congratulations to all of the volunteers who have worked so hard to enhance the quality of their community by having modern library facilities.

BETHLEHEM PLACE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): In 1985, the Bethlehem housing project of Niagara was launched through the efforts of a Christian service group known as Outreach Niagara, local churches and concerned citizens of all political stripes and representing a wide cross-section of St Catharines.

The provincial government has withdrawn \$160,000 in annual funding used at Bethlehem Place to provide support services to residents. It is very likely that this will put an end to one of the most successful community-based efforts to help end the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency.

Current programs within Bethlehem Place are aimed at residents taking control of their lives, developing self-confidence and skills needed to cope with their situations. They have seminars which provide a forum for learning how to deal with basic life skills, addictive patterns and family life; support counsellors who help residents determine their goals, how to achieve them, and give necessary support and encouragement to move on to a productive life; a relationship with more than 30 social service agencies throughout Niagara that refer residents to Bethlehem Place for housing and support.

Bethlehem Place shares the government's concern about welfare dependency, and Bethlehem Place works to end dependency on welfare by getting at the root causes. Productive lives are built that are able to contribute more than they receive.

I call upon the government to change this unwise decision to remove the \$160,000 annual grant and to restore it so people can turn their lives around and so an essential service can be provided to our community.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): I wish to bring to the attention of the members and citizens the continuing saga of the remarkable partnership that is unfolding in Ontario, a partnership based on politics, commitment, friendship and money. That partnership is manifested by the remarkable list of Mulroney political hacks being hired, at public expense, by this government. There are many.

Today, I bring yet another one to your attention. Mr John Toogood comes from the office of Mulroney cabinet minister Doug Lewis. It is obvious that Mr Harris owes Mr Mulroney something. Why else is he hiring a bunch of hacks from the discredited Mulroney administration?

It's time Mr Harris told us more about this remarkable partnership. After all, he is using public dollars.

Mr John Toogood is a Tory party activist and, of course, a Mulroney loyalist. Mr Toogood has been hired as the executive assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. At what cost, God only knows, but I suspect it's closer to \$100,000 a year than \$50,000.

After all, Mulroney and his gang didn't come cheap, and you all know that. If you don't know it, I suggest you read a book by Stevie Cameron called On the Take—Crime, Corruption and Greed in the Mulroney Years.

So we know Mr Toogood is a Mulroney loyalist, but I suspect his loyalty to Mr Mulroney pales beside the degree of loyalty being demonstrated by Mr Harris. Why? We all respect loyalty. Let's just hope that the list of Mulroney loyalists is a short one.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): My statement concerns the announcement made by the Labour minister on October 4, the introduction of Bill 7 repealing the job-killing Bill 40 labour legislation. I received a letter the morning after its introduction, the first in what I am sure will be a long string of testimonials for our actions, from the Milton Chamber of Commerce:

"The Milton Chamber of Commerce and its member businesses support the repeal of Bill 40. The implementation of Bill 40 resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs as well as the loss of many billions of investment dollars." It was signed by Michael Bourgon, president, Milton Chamber of Commerce.

Since that letter I have received others, voicing their enthusiastic support for our government's actions, notably, the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce, Acton Precision Millwrights Ltd and members of the agricultural community, referring to Bill 91.

Amid all the condemnation and criticism from the opposition with respect to this government's amendments to this legislation, we have now heard from the business constituents of Halton North, people who helped elect this member and who are in full support of our actions on this side of the House.

MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I beg to inform the House that I've laid upon the table the individual members' expenditures report for the fiscal

year 1994-95. The members will find a copy in their desks in the chamber.

LOTTERY FUND-RAISER

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Yesterday, the member for Windsor-Riverside (Mr Cooke) rose on a question of order to seek my advice concerning another member's connection with a lottery that was held in that member's constituency.

If the member for Windsor-Riverside is indicating or has been informed that the situation raises a criminal matter, I have to say that I cannot advise the member as to what course of action he should take. Our precedents here indicate that the Speaker is not in a position to render legal advice or an opinion. I refer the member to rulings at page 4,257 of the Hansard for June 13, 1988, page 692 of the Hansard for April 23, 1990, and page 213 of the Hansard for April 22, 1993.

Nevertheless, I thank the member for the concern that he has raised.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Yesterday, the member for Algoma (Mr Wildman) rose in the House on a question of privilege before question period. The member requested that the Speaker determine whether or not the Minister of Community and Social Services (Mr Tsubouchi) was "deliberately misleading the members of this House" when he indicated in last Tuesday's question period that the government had made no decision on a matter concerning his portfolio.

This member also requested that the Speaker determine whether or not "the Premier did counsel the minister to make misleading statements...."

The leader of the third party (Mr Rae), the leader of the official opposition (Mrs McLeod), and the Premier (Mr Harris) spoke to the question of privilege.

Later the same day, the member for Beaches-Woodbine (Ms Lankin) rose on a question of privilege that was separate from but related to the question of privilege raised by the member for Algoma.

The member requested that the Speaker review the record concerning a document that the Minister of Community and Social Services had indicated earlier he would be willing to make available.

I have had an opportunity to review the Hansard, our precedents and the relevant authorities concerning the issues raised in these various submissions.

Let me say several things at the outset. First, because members—all members—are presumed to be honourable, no member should suggest otherwise.

Second, it is not the responsibility of the Speaker to determine the veracity of statements that are made in the House. In this regard, let me refer members to two precedents.

On June 7, 1988, a member rose in this House on a question of privilege concerning an alleged inconsistency in a minister's response to an oral question. The member requested that the matter be referred to a committee "to determine whether the minister intentionally or whether the minister inadvertently lied to the House." Speaker

Edighoffer responded by making the following remarks (at page 4101 of that day's Hansard):

"It is not the Speaker's duty to judge the validity of the words used. I cannot make a judgement on whether any member has stated the facts correctly."

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In a similar vein, Speaker Warner made the following remarks on November 18, 1993 (on page 4140 of the Hansard for that day) in response to a member's claim that a minister was misleading the House:

"The veracity of statements is not to be tested by the Speaker. Those are matters to be dealt with by members of the House in orderly debate."

Let me turn to the extract from page 119 of the 21st edition of Erskine May that was mentioned by the member for Algoma. The authority for the proposition in Erskine May that making a deliberately misleading statement in the House may be grounds for contempt is a 1963 resolution of the House of Commons at Westminster. That resolution found a member guilty of grave contempt for making a personal statement in the House that he later admitted was not true. The circumstances raised by the member for Algoma—and the similar set of circumstances raised by the member for Beaches-Woodbine—cannot compare with the very serious circumstances associated with that incident.

That 1963 resolution is the only authority in Erskine May for the proposition that the making of a deliberately misleading statement may be treated as a contempt. The circumstances surrounding the resolution are explained in greater detail on pages 704 and 705 of the second edition of House of Representatives Practice. This authority indicates that although many claims have been raised—as a matter of privilege or contempt—that a member has deliberately misled the House, no Speaker has ever accepted such a claim.

These statistics suggest an obvious point, namely, that it will be a rare situation indeed in which there can be a finding of contempt. The incidents that were brought to my attention yesterday are not suggestive of contempt.

On a separate but related matter, the member for Mississauga South (Mrs Marland) rose on a question of order concerning the way in which the member for Algoma had framed his question of privilege. My review of Hansard indicates that when the member for Algoma used the words "deliberately misleading" and "misleading," he did so in the context of a request that the Speaker review the circumstances. As the member for Algoma himself indicated, he was not suggesting that the minister had misled members.

I thank the various members who made submissions on the matters addressed in this ruling for their contributions.

WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 10

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Yesterday, Monday, October 16, the member for Dufferin-Peel (Mr Tilson) introduced a bill entitled An Act respecting the rounding of the Penny in Cash Transactions. It has been brought to my attention that this bill is in unilingual format only, which is contrary to subsection 3(2) of the French Language Services Act, 1986. I must therefore

advise the House that this bill contravenes standing order 38(d) and must be removed from the order paper.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I am very pleased to announce today the appointment of Graham Reynolds as director of the special investigations unit. The special investigations unit is an independent body that investigates police actions which result in serious injury or death from alleged criminal activity.

Since his call to the bar in 1976, Mr Reynolds has worked in the administration of justice for the federal and provincial governments at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada. During this time, he has gained a high level of knowledge and experience with policing and investigative agencies. Since 1988, he has managed 48 lawyers and 23 support staff who are responsible for federal legal administration in southern Ontario. Prior to that, Mr Reynolds was a senior counsel and section head of the federal tax litigation office in Edmonton. He has also held the position of special prosecutor with the Attorney General of Alberta.

An excellent lawyer and administrator, Mr Reynolds brings to the job an effective, fair and balanced approach to decision-making. Mr Reynolds will serve as SIU director on a one-year secondment from his current position as general counsel and section head of prosecutions in the Toronto region with the federal Department of Justice.

He replaces Dana Venner, the acting director, who has worked diligently to eliminate the chronic backlog of cases that was crippling the SIU's effectiveness and reputation as an oversight body. Ms Venner agreed to take over the director's job last March on a temporary basis.

In seven short months, her commonsense approach to management resulted in the SIU's backlog being reduced by 35%. At the end of February there were 70 outstanding investigations; she has now reduced that number to 45. She quickly wrapped up the four investigations that dated back to 1992. In addition, Ms Venner eliminated 60% of the case backlog from 1993. Currently, there are only two cases left from that period of time. Since her arrival, Ms Venner has also quickly dealt with the 1994 case backlog, reducing it by almost 77%. When she arrived there were 39 outstanding cases; now there are nine.

Her efforts demonstrate that the legislation works and, with proper management, the SIU can function in an effective manner. The government owes a debt of gratitude to Ms Venner and thanks her for her efforts.

The SIU is responsible for the most sensitive cases involving police and public. To be effective, the public must have confidence that the SIU is conducting impartial investigations. With the appointment of Mr Reynolds, the people of Ontario can be assured that the SIU will continue to operate in an effective, fair and efficient manner.

In the members' gallery today are Mr Reynolds and Ms Venner. I thank them on behalf of the people of Ontario.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I rise today to acknowledge a serious mistake made by my ministry. I would like to fully disclose to the Legislature the chronology of events that led up to the issues raised in the House yesterday.

On August 29, staff of my ministry drafted a series of amendments to regulations regarding social assistance eligibility. When these regulations were brought to me, I gave explicit instructions that any regulatory changes that affected the disabled be removed. Regrettably, my instructions were not carried out and the incorrect regulations proceeded through the approval process.

In response to questions in the Legislature raised last week, I said that no decisions had been made. I had not been informed at that point that the incorrect regulations had proceeded. I regret any confusion this might have caused.

I have spoken with the officials involved and their superiors. I am satisfied that this was a human error and not deliberate. Mistakes do happen. When they do, the proper course is to acknowledge them and to correct them immediately. This is what my ministry has done.

The official who made this mistake and the deputy minister have apologized, and I have accepted their apology. As the minister, I apologize to the House and to the people of Ontario for this mistake, with the commitment that it will not happen again.

I'm making this statement because I want the House and the people of this province to know the facts. We are strongly committed to protecting the benefits of the disabled. At no time were steps taken to implement the change. No change took place to any benefits provided to the permanently unemployed people of Ontario.

1400

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): I will comment on the Attorney General's statement. First of all, I'm very happy to share with him in congratulating Ms Venner on the job which she has accomplished in such a short time period, and I certainly want to congratulate Mr Reynolds and wish him well in his new responsibilities.

But I am concerned about one aspect of the minister's statement, when he indicates—and I think he's accepting the fact that the SIU's structure at the present time is satisfactory and the minister is under the impression that with administrative improvements and good administration from Mr Reynolds, the present regulations and law will suffice. I want to differ with him. I want to remind him about his comments when he was in opposition questioning the structure of the SIU.

In particular, there is one underlying problem with respect to the SIU which cannot be resolved by good administration, and that's a structural weakness in the composition of the regulations themselves. The Police Services Act requires police officers to answer questions and cooperate with the SIU. On the other hand we have

the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which permits individual citizens not to incriminate themselves.

We have seen the experience of police officers refusing to cooperate with the SIU because they did not want to incriminate themselves. In fact, last week in the Legislature I brought to the attention of the Attorney General a case in point, the Moses case, where the police officer was not cooperating with the SIU, taking the charter defence. That cannot be improved or changed by administration.

I urged the Attorney General at that time to conduct a court reference on this issue, to find out the parameters of the Police Services Act's obligation for an officer to give information and his or her rights under the charter. That is still an outstanding issue, and unless and until the Attorney General resolves that judicially, and I'm urging him to do it by way of a reference, there will always be this flaw in the legislation at the present time. So I'm urging him to correct that flaw, and that is something which he is burdening his new director with. I wish that he would assist him by changing the law in that regard.

The other thing I would say to the Attorney General is that he's making this announcement out of context. The people in the province of Ontario, in fact the legal profession, are looking for leadership from the Attorney General on where the justice system is going. I'm sorry that he did not have anything in the speech from the throne. He has not made a major speech on this issue and I encourage him to do so. I think he has the ability and the capacity to show leadership and I am encouraging him to do so.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I want to respond to the comment made by the Minister of Community and Social Services. I am absolutely astonished at the comments made by the Minister of Community and Social Services. What is in front of us today is not a question of a drafting error; it is a question of who's in charge. It is clearly a question of who's calling the shots in this ministry; it is a question of a ministry that is out of control; it is a question of a ministry that doesn't know one part of the day from another.

We have a committee made up of the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, a lawyer; the vice-chair, the Attorney General, another lawyer; the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, an experienced legislator; the ministers of Transportation, Citizenship and Environment. This legislation and regulations committee of cabinet must approve every single change that comes through. How can such a blatant error occur?

Is it a coincidence that the minister stood up last Tuesday in the House and made reference to changes in the definition of "disability" and then we see this in front of us? Is it a coincidence that it had to be the opposition and the media to bring this to the government's attention? Had that not occurred, 115,000 seniors and disabled would have had their benefits cut.

Minister, this is not good enough. To say this was a drafting error is to suggest that the Titanic hit an ice cube. It is wrong. It is not good enough.

This continues to be one of many errors that have occurred daily in this ministry. Minister, if you cannot control the actions of your staff, then you must question who is calling the shots. The government members and the ministers must be responsible. The accountability must stop with the minister. It is not good enough to pass the buck to the staff, to the deputy minister and to the people who drafted this regulation.

This must fall clearly in the lap of the minister. It is a question of competence. It is a question of the direction of this ministry and this government. It is out of control, and disabled people and people who are on welfare in this province are paying the price as a result of this incompetence.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): The issue is partly the one which has been mentioned by my colleague from Hamilton, and that is the question as to how a mistake of this magnitude could have been made. But there is another question which I don't think the minister has addressed in his statement today.

He starts out by saying he wants "to fully disclose...the chronology of events that led up to the issues raised in the House....

"On August 29, staff of my ministry drafted a series of amendments to regulations regarding social assistance eligibility."

How would they do this? By spontaneous combustion? How would it be that the staff at the ministry of Comsoc would come forward with regulations? Who would have instructed the staff at the ministry to come up with regulations affecting eligibility for social service if it is not the minister? Why wouldn't his fingerprints be inserted prior to August 29? How would it be that on August 29—and I ask all these questions knowing now that the Leader of the Opposition will get the first chance to ask them herself when the time comes for questions. So I speak with candour and with some frustration. But it strikes me that that's a reasonable question to ask.

All of us recognize that mistakes are made and all of us recognize that public servants do their best. None of us wants to point the finger at any unfortunate official and say that they are responsible. I certainly don't want to do that. What I do want to do is say that the minister and the cabinet have to take responsibility for the steps that are taken. It is not possible, it defies credibility, to suggest that the ministry, on its own, came up with a series of regulatory changes as drastic and as severe as the changes which were eventually approved by cabinet.

We also know, and it's not mentioned anywhere in this document, that in order for a regulation to go through to the next stage of the process—perhaps the member for Hamilton East isn't fully familiar with this, but if my memory serves me correctly, and it's not that long ago that I presided over a cabinet—the chairman of cabinet has to sign a document on the basis of a cabinet discussion, on the basis of a submission by the minister. The minister has to sign, the deputy has to sign, all that documentation has to be there.

For a mistake of this kind to have been made, instructions have to have been made to the staff of the ministry to prepare regulations. Those regulations have to have been submitted, discussed in the leg and reg committee, then discussed in a full meeting of cabinet and then signed by the chairman of cabinet upon approval. That's how it works, and that chronology is not even recognized in the minister's document.

I would say to the minister, in all candour, if you're going to come clean, let's have a complete exposition as to how it could be that these regulations came to be drafted in the first place and how it could possibly be that the permanently unemployed would be so singled out for discrimination and for action by your government.

I do not subscribe to the view that it was sheer inadvertence that led to this taking place. That is not an adequate explanation as to what has happened and the minister still has some explaining to do.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): With reference to the statement today from the Attorney General, I want to rise to congratulate Mr Reynolds on his appointment. It's unfortunate that it's only a one-year secondment, because I know that stability in the SIU is very important. I hope that the support he will find from the ministry and indeed from all of the players in the area will enable him to continue that work.

I'm very pleased to join with the Attorney General in congratulating Ms Dana Venner on the work that she did as acting director. Having appointed her in March, I know how reluctant she was to take on that job. What she has done is to act with the very best traditions of the public service and we all stand to be grateful.

The minister is quite right that the SIU needs the confidence of both the community and the police community. It is going to be extremely important as time goes on, in dealing with the issues raised by the member for Ottawa West, that we all work together to ensure that civilian oversight of the police has its very best traditions in the SIU.

ORAL QUESTIONS HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question again today is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday, we heard from this minister how concerned he was about the lengthy waiting list for heart surgery in Ontario. His sympathy and concern are of course appropriate and welcome, but they do not do much for patients and their families who are waiting for surgery and who are worrying about whether they will make it to the top of the list.

Minister, I suggest to you today that they do not need your sympathy; they need your action and they need it now. You should be in a position to make a specific commitment as to when you're going to fix the problem.

My question today again is a simple one: Will you stand up today and announce when and how you will reinvest in cardiac care? How many days will cardiac patients have to wait for their surgery while they wait for you to act?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I appreciate the question once again from the leader of the official

opposition. I reiterate to her and to the people of Ontario and the members of this House what I said yesterday: I'm working very hard, I'm talking to front-line providers, and we are currently putting together the dollar amount that may be needed to patch up what is a very serious problem in the province of Ontario, and I hope on behalf of the government we'll be making an announcement in the very, very near future.

1410

Mrs McLeod: That response is simply not good enough. It's not good enough for patients who are waiting for surgery, it's not good enough for their families, and it's not good enough coming from a minister who has a plan, a plan that was submitted to him in the summertime as to how he could respond to this crisis.

Dr David Naylor of the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences has made it quite clear that he gave you such a plan last summer. That plan would cost \$20 million. You say you're looking for the dollars to be able to respond to this crisis, but that \$20 million is less than a third of the money left in what you have referred to as a reinvestment fund. There's \$67 million left in that reinvestment fund, you've got a \$20-million plan, and I just don't see what the problem is.

We know that you know how to cut; you can do that instantly. We know that you're sympathetic to this situation. Now we want to see some action. I ask you again, will you commit to acting immediately on the plan that was submitted to you last summer, a plan that could already have saved lives and relieved families and patients of anxiety and pain?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member leaves the impression that last summer was last year and that this plan's been around for a long time. It's only been around for a few days, and I know Dr Naylor will be pleased to confirm that. It came in towards the end of September, which was only a few days ago. I immediately began working on reviewing those recommendations with officials. I went to Ottawa last Friday, in an unprecedented move, and sat down with Dr Wilbert Keon to ask him—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Oh, wow. We didn't see you there.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): We didn't see you in Ottawa.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Wilson: No, honourable members should know that he thanked me very, very sincerely for coming to see him, for asking for his advice as a front-line, world-leader cardiac surgeon on how we best invest the dollars we have. I'm looking forward to making that announcement in the very near future to help the people who are on our waiting lists in Ontario.

Mrs McLeod: There is no need for the minister to make the superhuman effort of going to Ottawa to discuss the situation. Minister, you have a plan. You have a plan that tells you exactly how you can deal with the situation, a plan presented to you by the very body that has been put in place to tell you how to effectively use our health care dollars. You've got the money and you've got the

plan. Don't talk to us about days, that you've only had it for days, because every day you delay makes a difference to that patient who is waiting for heart surgery.

We see that the hospitals in this province are struggling to cope with the crisis, and have been struggling. I mentioned yesterday the situation at Sunnybrook hospital. Let me tell you today about the situation at the Toronto Hospital, where the provincial adult cardiac care network recommended that they increase the number of heart surgeries they were doing by 150 for each of the next three years. Now, that is a 20% increase at that one hospital alone, and that is just to meet growing demands, not even to shorten the waiting list. That hospital decided it would go ahead with those additional surgeries at the recommendation of the cardiac care network. But you have not indicated and your ministry has not indicated whether you are prepared to guarantee funding for the operation.

I suggest to you, Minister, that the hospitals are doing their job to the best of their ability and to the limits of their resources and beyond.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: It is now time for you to do your job. We need your action, not your sympathy today, Minister. We need to see money flowing to the hospitals so they can do what everyone agrees needs to be done. When are we going to see some action, and how many patients will have to die on the waiting list before you act?

Hon Mr Wilson: I don't think it's helpful that the Leader of the Opposition raise the anxiety of patients, of their families, of the people of Ontario and front-line providers in cardiac care.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Come to order.

Mr Pouliot: They are like jackals. They never stop— **The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon is out of order, I must remind him.

Hon Mr Wilson: I say to the honourable member that this is a serious issue. Making a political football out of it does nothing to help those patients.

I am working very hard on behalf of yourself, this government, the people of Ontario, to ensure that we reinvest the dollars available, that we reinvest those wisely, that I take the advice and wisdom of the front-line providers themselves so we don't have to keep coming back and raising these questions in the Legislature. I want to bring in a more permanent solution to this problem, which has recurred over the years. We owe that to the patients on the waiting list, we owe it to their families and we owe it, in the name of good management, to the people of Ontario.

We will be making that announcement in the very near future. I need to hear from just a few more front-line providers and then we'll make that announcement, I assure all members of this House.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, I would like you to note for the record that it is Dr Naylor himself who has said that we can expect to see patients die on the waiting lists if this minister does not act.

1420

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My second question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. It's becoming apparent during this minister's reign of error that we're going to continue to see him make serious mistakes. This minister told people on welfare that they could earn back the cuts he had imposed on their benefits. Well, that is not the case, and we are still waiting for the minister to make good on his commitment to fix that mistake.

We've also seen the minister make what he calls a drafting error, which would have reduced benefits for some 115,000 disabled people and their families. The minister acknowledges that that was a mistake, even though he takes no responsibility for it, even though he gave instructions to his ministry to redefine "disability." But we assume he has made a commitment to fix that mistake.

Today I am asking this minister to correct another serious mistake that affects hundreds of abused women and children across this province. Yesterday the member for Ottawa Centre asked the minister for women's issues about the government's decision to eliminate funding for Harmony House in Ottawa, which provides second-stage shelter and services for abused women and children. In response to that question, the minister for women's issues replied, "I can assure you that the core funding to Harmony House has not been withdrawn."

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): And your question is?

Mrs McLeod: I ask the minister, can he tell us whether what his colleague said yesterday in this House was accurate? If what the minister for women's issues said was accurate, can this minister tell us his definition of core services, and can he tell us what is left of those core services to Harmony House and other second-stage housing projects?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): We are continuing to fund and spend over \$60 million to support women's shelters and other services for victims of family violence. This funds almost 100 shelters—I believe it's 98—to help women and children in need. These shelters will ensure that women will have a place to go where they can be safe and protected, and not just a place to go but a place where they can receive the support they need to get through this difficult time.

Mrs McLeod: Clearly neither the Minister of Community and Social Services nor the minister responsible for women's issues gets it, again. I was not asking you about your funding for emergency shelters; I'm sure that will be an issue for another day, Minister. I'm asking you about core funding for second-stage housing projects, the core funding that your colleague the minister for women's issues assured us had not been cut.

I suggest to you that it is the Ministry of Housing which provides funding for bricks and mortar for second-stage housing, and that it was your responsibility to provide the core funding for services for abused women and that that core funding went to staff and services. And

I suggest to you that your policy is rather like a neutron bomb: The building may still be standing but everything else has been wiped out; the staff and the services and the program are all gone.

I have a copy of a letter dated October 5, 1995—

The Speaker: Do you have a question?

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, I will place the question based on the letter that I present to you and to the minister, the letter from the area manager of the ministry's Ottawa office, and it's written to the president of the board of Harmony House. The letter states, "I am writing to advise you the second-stage housing for abused women program has been identified as one which the government is no longer able to continue funding."

Minister, I ask you, how can you or the minister for women's issues suggest that you are continuing to provide core funding for second-stage housing projects when the funding for staff and programs has disappeared?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I think that to categorize the core services of my ministry as not serving the purpose is a little bit of a stretch. The funding we are providing, the \$60 million in women's shelters, does include much programming to actually fulfil these needs. As the Leader of the Opposition correctly pointed out, this government, through the Ministry of Housing, does continue to support residences in the second-stage women's shelters.

Mrs McLeod: I simply can't follow the minister's answer. I don't know whether he's still telling me that he hasn't cut the funding for emergency shelters and just wants to ignore the fact that he has cut the funding for second-stage housing projects, or whether is telling me that this letter from the area manager of the Ottawa office is some sort of new drafting error or bureaucratic error and we'll have an apology tomorrow for the mistake that particular manager made.

I suggest that if this minister and this government are not providing the support services for abused women in second-stage housing, they are not providing funding for core services. There is no way around that. Your minister of women's issues said you were not cutting core funding, and you are. You don't seem to feel you are closing second-stage housing projects, but you are. Minister, if you didn't mean to cut the core funding and if you didn't mean to close down second-stage funding projects, if this is another transcribing error of some sort, will you act now to fix the mistake? Will you restore the real core funding for Harmony House and for scores of other second-stage housing projects across this province which are threatened by your cuts?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I certainly hope the Leader of the Opposition is not suggesting that \$60 million is somehow an insignificant fund to include in terms of programming and counselling.

The only services affected through the reduction with respect to the second-stage women's shelters were those of counselling. We're very confident that, out of that \$60 million, there is sufficient programming and counselling. Our idea right now is to protect the core services. Core services are for women in need, and we certainly have

been putting in \$60 million to assist. Certainly I think the programming is there, and we're trying to eliminate what may be some duplication.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I want to ask the minister some questions arising out of the statement he made in the House today. He states, "On August 29, staff of my ministry drafted a series of amendments to regulations regarding social service eligibility." I wonder if the minister can tell us, under whose instructions did they make these changes and under what cabinet order did they make these changes?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): On August 29, the date the leader of the third party is referring to, a series of amendments that had been suggested were going to cabinet. As I indicated before, when these regulations were brought to me and I saw that the definition of "disabled" or regulations that might affect the disabled were included, I asked explicitly that they not be included in the package. Certainly we have not made a decision on the definition of "disabled" at this point.

Mr Rae: No, this won't do, Minister. You have to answer the question or try to answer the question that's put to you. It's a very simple question.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): You can check the five-year record.

Mr Rae: If the Premier wants to answer some questions, he can try to do that.

I want to ask the minister again, how is it that on August 29 the staff of his ministry would have drafted a series of amendments to regulations? How could that have happened? Did it happen on the basis of instructions from the minister?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: This government had made a commitment already to move the elderly and disabled out of the welfare system. It's our intention to develop a program of assistance to protect income support for the elderly and the disabled. As I've stated previously in the House, we intend to bring more clarity to the definition of "disabled persons" as part of that process.

Also, I must add that in my statement I have already apologized to the House for the mistake that was made.

Mr Rae: The minister commits himself in this statement, quoting from his words in the second paragraph, "I would like to fully disclose to the Legislature the chronology of events that led up to the issues raised in the House."

All I'm asking the minister to do is to fully disclose something that's not in the statement. Staff of ministries do not prepare regulations by spontaneous combustion. They respond to instructions from ministers, from deputies, from cabinet secretaries, from somebody. I want to ask the minister, how would it be that the staff would have prepared regulations regarding social services eligibility if the instructions did not come from the minister?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: As I indicated before, at that time we were looking at a series of amendments dealing with eligibility, but we were also looking at a program to

take the elderly and the disabled out of the system. Frankly, this is all part of what we were looking at. I can't believe that it is appropriate for the disabled or the elderly to be on the welfare system, and certainly when we saw that the definition of "disabled" was included among the regulations, we made explicit instructions to take them out.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question.

Mr Rae: Let's keep going here and just try and deal with how it would be that this could have happened.

Again, I'd like to ask the minister to confirm: Did he sign the cabinet submission that had the change to the thousands of people on permanently unemployed? Did he sign that recommendation, and is that the recommendation he took to the cabinet discussion with respect to the changes under way?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Once again, I apologize to the House for the error. It was regrettable. It was never intended. But I think the leader of the third party is also raising an appropriate question. It's one I've also asked of my officials, how this error occurred. I'm satisfied that this particular case is one of human error and not of intention. As a result, we've directed our staff to put in safeguards to ensure this does not happen again.

Mr Rae: I want to ask the minister again, did he sign the recommendation to cabinet that contained the regulatory changes? Did you sign that document?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Clearly, the process we have to go through in order to sign any submissions to cabinet—and certainly I signed the submission.

I've also indicated already that a mistake was made and I've already apologized to the House. Certainly there was a mistake made; we've admitted it. I think the best solution at this point in time is to correct the mistake, which we did as soon as it was brought to my attention.

Mr Rae: Can the minister tell us whether he signed the document before he read it? Did he read it before he signed it?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: As I indicated before, there was a series of regulations in the package that had been sent back for amendment. The instructions were clearly given to take out any reference to the disabled in this matter. Unfortunately, it was not done.

1430

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. The Windsor Star reports today that a Toronto law firm with close ties to the Tory government has been given a lucrative government contract. In fact, a former member of the firm, Guy Giorno, a close aide to the Premier, was on paid leave of absence from the firm to work on the Tory campaign team before he moved to the Premier's office. Now we learn that the firm has been given a \$15,000-a-month contract to lead negotiations with OPSEU.

Minister, is this the new Tory tendering process, where you only get a contract if you have Tory connections and have contributed to the Conservative Party? Minister, will

you confirm whether Hicks Morley Hamilton was the low bidder for the contract, and will you release details of the government's request for submissions for this contract and the responses from the firms that participated?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The situation that this government encountered is, number one, we are facing 12 tables in terms of negotiations this year as opposed to five tables previously. Consequently, the negotiation process is much more complex.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Have you got 12 Tory hacks?

Hon David Johnson: Secondly, one of the directors involved, in a key position, changed positions just before the negotiations were to start. The staff came to me at that point and indicated that assistance was needed in terms of the negotiating process.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The member for Essex South is out of order.

Hon David Johnson: As a result, we approached three firms, three firms well recognized in labour law, and we accepted the best and lowest price from those three firms, which is the firm in question.

I can also indicate to you that this firm, which is well recognized in labour law, also performed services for the Liberal government prior to 1990, and this same firm, a well-recognized and highly regarded firm, provided services for the NDP government between 1990 and 1995.

We think we've made an excellent choice and that we'll get excellent service from this firm.

Mr Cordiano: It's very clear, however, that the minister misses the point of the question, absolutely misses the point, because the real exercise in all of this is that only friends of the government, only with Tory connections, and those who have contributed to the last campaign for the Tories are going—that's the message the minister is sending out; that's the message this government sends out.

At the end of the day, Minister, there is no tendering process that you followed, and if there is in fact, then you should lay that before this House for us to examine. The tendering process is an obscure one, if one does actually exist. We want to know what tendering process you're going to bring forward as you dismantle your government, as you sell bits and pieces of it to the private sector. We want to know what process in fact you're going to be following, or is it going to be, as I say, only the friends of the government who benefit from the exercise of privatization that you're now engaged in?

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mr Cordiano: Certainly it seems to the public, the appearance is such that you're only going to favour Tory cronies and Tory friends as you privatize every part of the government. That's the impression that you're leaving with the public.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member will put the question.

Mr Cordiano: Can you tell us the exact procedure by which you're going to privatize government services?

Hon David Johnson: The member has indicated that I missed the point. I think the point to the general public, the people who are watching this Legislature, is: Did we get the best firm for the best price? I'm happy to indicate to the member for Lawrence that the answer is yes. We put out requests for proposals, we sought the best firms, we took the lowest price and we got the firm with the best experience; a firm, I might say, that has had direct experience in dealing with OPSEU, the union involved.

This is a firm which apparently was good enough to be employed by the Liberal government during its period; it was a firm that was good enough to be employed by the NDP government during its time in office. I think the point is that we are getting excellent value for money and the people of Ontario are well served.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I want to ask the minister again some questions with respect to not only the statement that he made today but answers that he's given me and other members concerning the issue of benefits for the disabled. The minister says it was a mistake that the category of "permanently unemployable" was taken out of the range of benefits. He's also said that the government is considering making changes to the definition of "disability."

I'd like therefore to ask the minister how we are to take the statement that he makes on the bottom of page 2, where he says, "We are strongly committed to protecting the benefits of the disabled." I'd like to ask the minister, can he tell us, is it the intention of the government to change the definition of "disability" and/or change the definition of "permanently unemployable"? Is that now under consideration by the government?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): As I indicated before, what we're looking at is a new system, an income supplement, to get the disabled and the aged off the welfare system. As such, that's why we're examining what a person who is disabled is. We're looking at the options. We have not made the decisions on this matter, and that's the same statement as I gave before.

Mr Rae: Therefore, I'd like to ask the minister, when he says, "We are strongly committed to protecting the benefits of the disabled," can people who are now receiving benefits as disabled people and as permanently unemployable people—can you give the assurance to each and every one of those persons that they will continue to receive disability and social assistance benefits from the government of Ontario? Can you make that categorical assurance to those people today?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I want to assure the people of Ontario that we will move on these issues with sensitivity and that the needs of current recipients will be met.

COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

Mrs Janet Ecker (Durham West): I have a question to the Minister of Education and Training. Some days ago the Ontario College of Teachers Implementation Committee released its report entitled The Privilege of Professionalism.

I've had several questions from both teachers and parents regarding our intentions and the recommendations of this report, so I would like to ask the minister what his intentions are regarding the future shape and direction of a proposed college of teachers.

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I'm pleased to advise the member for Durham West that I have received the implementation committee's report. As you know, the implementation committee was established in February and submitted their report last Wednesday.

I think it's a very thorough report. It addresses all of the items the implementation committee was asked to address, including making some suggestions about training and professional development for teachers in the province of Ontario. It talks about pre-service for teachers and in-service for teachers, and it also makes suggestions about establishing a register for teachers.

I believe the college of teachers that's been proposed will be one that helps teachers develop a sense of professionalism in this province which I'm sure they'll all back.

Mrs Ecker: What time line does the minister have for perhaps introducing legislation or changes along these lines?

Hon Mr Snobelen: No final determination has yet been made about the college of teachers. However, I'm pleased to inform this House that we will be working with the implementation committee to spell out the details of the implementation and also to talk to the members of the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the representatives of that organization, about a plan that they have submitted to the ministry, that I have committed to them that I would review that plan and review the proposals from the implementation committee.

I would like to note that we are pleased that the member for Ottawa Centre spoke highly of the implementation committee's report and I am sure the member for Windsor-Riverside is equally pleased with the report, so we would expect some great cooperation from the House when we bring forward ultimately the college of teachers. 1440

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): To the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations: Minister, you are aware of the overwhelming evidence that people from every region of this province do not trust how gasoline prices are set and have become very cynical, not only of the gas companies but of governments, on this particular issue.

You are also aware of the private member's bill that I will be introducing this afternoon, which is designed to ensure that gas companies will be held accountable for the prices at the pumps. The public wants this debate to be held and will continue to be very cynical of the gas companies and of governments unless the issue is addressed.

Minister, my question to you is this: Will you acknowledge that there is a recurring problem with gas pricing practices across the province and will you take

the necessary steps to send this bill to committee for public hearings so that the problem can be responsibly addressed?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I asked Bob Elgie about this.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): With regard to gas pricing, it's interesting the member for St Catharines says he asked the Minister of Energy, I believe, the Honourable Robert Elgie, this question some time ago.

I can remember the former Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations in 1988, the Honourable Bill Wrye, was asked this question. In fact I asked the Treasurer, the Honourable Floyd Laughren, this question in 1991.

I think that the answer all of those ministers would give to this question is that we would love to find a solution to this problem, we would really love to find a solution to this problem. If the member has a good suggestion on how to address this, we will listen to that suggestion.

Mr Chiarelli: Indeed, the bill has been very well received by many people across the province, and there is a lot of interest in it, but I do want to remind the minister that in the last Parliament your Premier, the MPP for Nipissing, had this to say to the NDP government: "I know you share my concern on the difference in gasoline prices. I ask the minister if he does not agree there is a gas price problem, and why are you so silent on that problem?" That's your Premier, several years ago, of the NDP government.

Of course, the MPP for Carleton, namely you, Minister, in the last Parliament had this to say: "What is the Rae government going to do to stop the gouging of eastern Ontario consumers paying too much for their gasoline?"

My question again, Minister, is this: Are you now saying that you and your Premier were wrong then? Have you changed your mind and will you seriously look at the provisions of my bill?

Hon Mr Sterling: I think I did indicate in my opening that in fact we would look at constructive ideas. Several other provinces have attempted to regulate gasoline with limited success.

The province of Prince Edward Island, for instance, has regulation of gasoline prices, and has the highest prices in Canada as a result of that. Nova Scotia got out of the regulation of gas prices in 1991, after having 50 years of regulation of gas prices, and their gas prices now are lower than they were when it was regulated.

Consequently, to the member for Ottawa West, I, like my government, a new government, am open to fresh ideas on how to approach this problem. We look forward to reading your bill and to debating your bill in private members' hour so that we can fully understand the implications of it.

However, I must say that this is a government that is not looking for extra regulation, extra red tape, and if your bill requires a great deal of that, it would be looked at with some scepticism.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Now that the opposition, as well as the people of Ontario, has good reason to be concerned about whether or not you and your colleagues are reading and understanding the laws that you are enacting in this province—as we've seen with your colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services—I am asking you today, in light of the fact that Bill 7 is an extremely complex, complicated, lengthy document running some 132 pages, would you today agree finally that province-wide public hearings are needed, if for no other reason than so we can be comfortable that what's signed here will work in light of what we've seen with your colleague who's made a major disaster and hurt potentially tens of thousands of people? Minister, will you today finally agree to province-wide public hearings on Bill 7?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): Mr Speaker, through you to the member for Hamilton Centre: As I have indicated to you, we have certainly indicated that we are willing to respond to any concerns. We're willing to have meetings. In fact at the present time I'm actually meeting with some unions regarding some changes that we are quite prepared to make. We have been consulting with individuals. Our door is always open for those individuals who have information that they want to share with us. Certainly we would agree to meet and to listen to all of the concerns out there.

Mr Christopherson: The minister will know that the answer she's given here today is in complete contradiction with the position that she took when she stood right here as the Labour critic for the third party. There were extensive consultations before Bill 40 was brought into the House, and indeed there were public hearings in London, Kingston, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Windsor.

Yet you said at that time, Minister, on August 4, 1992, the day the debate on Bill 40 began: "I can understand the government's desire to see some changes made to our labour laws, but you know, in something as sensitive as labour relations, it's important that you cooperate, consult and build consensus."

We agreed with you then. We ask that you agree with yourself and us now and again call on you for province-wide public hearings before you ram this draconian piece of legislation through this Legislature. Minister, I'm calling on you again to give the people of Ontario a chance to have a say before you change the way labour relations exist in this province.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Mr Speaker, through you to the member for Hamilton Centre, yes, I agree. I believe very strongly in the need to cooperate, I believe in the need to consult and I believe in the need to form consensus. Unfortunately that's exactly what your party did not do.

You pretended to cooperate, you went all over the province consulting, but in the end let me just remind you of what happened. Your minister, Mr Mackenzie, the Minister of Labour at the time, when he got three people from management, three people from labour, said: "Here are 30 issues related to the Labour Relations Act. Take a

look at them. We need some changes." Management came back and said, "We don't need any changes." Labour came back and said: "We like these 30 changes. In fact give us 61 more."

1450

HYDRO RATE FREEZE

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. The constituents of Niagara South have been very concerned about excessive increases in Hydro rates and the negative impact they have had on employment opportunities in my riding. For example, recently, Mr Russ Davies from Robin Hood Multifoods of Port Colborne, Ontario, asked me some excellent questions about this issue.

I told Mr Davies that this government is following through on its Common Sense Revolution promise of a five-year freeze in Ontario Hydro rates, which was confirmed both in the throne speech and then again in an official statement by the minister herself on October 3. What can the minister tell the House and Mr Davies about what follow-up there has been to her announcement in the House?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): I would like to thank the member for the question. A few weeks ago, in response to our promise in the Common Sense Revolution, we did commit to a five-year rate freeze for Ontario Hydro rates, and at the throne speech and again in the House I did give notice that we had requested Ontario Hydro to follow through on that request for a five-year rate freeze.

It is my pleasure to announce to members of the House today that in fact Ontario Hydro, following its board of directors' meeting, has agreed to a five-year rate freeze for the following year.

This is very good news for Ontario. It's following our plan for making Ontario competitive again and for keeping businesses competitive and in this province.

Mr Hudak: I am very pleased to hear that Ontario Hydro is responding so positively to the direction received from this government. Could the minister further explain to the House and to the constituents of Niagara South what this rate freeze really means to our economy and how this rate freeze will benefit the people of this province?

Hon Mrs Elliott: This rate freeze applies to the direct users, to the municipal utilities and to the customers all across this province. What it really means is, taking inflation into account, an actual decrease of 15% in Ontario Hydro rates. This is good news to keep those businesses in Ontario competitive and here working and supporting and employing taxpayers of Ontario.

CLOSURE OF JAILS

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): Today I have a question for the Solicitor General. Minister, on October 5, two days after you closed the halfway houses across Ontario, I asked you about your plans to close jails. You dismissed the question out of hand, saying there have been rumours of lists for years and that there were no such plans.

Well, Minister, I have a copy of your communications

plan from your ministry that outlines all of your closure plans. It is dated September 29, 1995, seven days before I asked you that question in this House. This plan outlines the procedure to be followed to close Camp Dufferin, and you have done that; to close the halfway houses, and you have done that; and it also outlines procedures to be followed to close the jails.

Minister, I have difficulty, and I'm sure the general public would have great difficulty, in reconciling what you said in this House to us and your actions. Minister, did you mislead this House?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): With all respect, I think the member has known me long enough to know that I'm not going to come in here and deliberately mislead him or any other member of this Legislature.

I want to indicate that what I said in my original response holds true today. I have not seen this document. What I have done, as all other ministries have done, is ask our officials to go back and look at efficiencies, recommendations in terms of how we can meet our operating targets.

I have indicated to you and I have indicated to others who have concerns in respect to the list that was originally published by the Provincial Auditor, I believe back in 1993, that I will talk to you, consult with you, members of the opposition and members of the government, with respect to any closure decisions prior to their being taken. I remain true to that commitment.

Mr Ramsay: Minister, on that day, October 5, you said to me, "We have made no decisions in respect to jail closures," but in fact your plan is two-thirds completed already, and it details very precisely exactly what procedures you would entail and would be involved by all pertinent ministry officials when jails are closed.

For example, regional managers are to contact the local OPP detachment commanders. The judiciary has to be contacted, the crowns, the defence bar in the affected communities, by fax letter. The minister's office has to call the mayors of the different municipalities where the jails are going to be closed, the OPP commissioner—I mean, the details are here. So you're telling me you have no decisions, except you've got such a detailed plan to do it without making the decision, I'm surprised that you would have gone to this length and this detail.

Minister, why don't you come clean and tell the people of Ontario that you have made a plan to close the jails of Ontario?

Hon Mr Runciman: I have come clean. We have no plans to close jails in the province. What I'm trying to indicate clearly to the member and other members of this Legislature is that I realize that recommendations are coming to me within the next number of weeks and that in all likelihood, based on the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor in 1993, they will indeed include the possibility of jail closures. I've never suggested otherwise.

I am not being critical of my staff in respect to preparing a full presentation, in respect to all of the questions that might arise, if indeed we make a decision to close a jail or a number of jails. They're talking about the consultation process, they're talking about the communications plan, and I think that's the appropriate way to deliver a package to a minister, so if you're making a decision or a recommendation to cabinet and your colleagues you'll have all of the information, all of the details, a fully detailed plan in front of you before you make that kind of a decision.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health, the man who's in charge of his ministry. The minister would know full well that there are district health councils across the province working very hard on hospital restructuring recommendations.

I'd ask the minister how it is that either he himself, as in the case of Sudbury, intervened in that local process, therefore jeopardizing the possibility of a local solution, or sends his officials to Ottawa, unless of course they went without him knowing. I think a man who runs his own ministry well would know if his officials went to Ottawa and claimed that they were taking over the process for hospital restructuring.

Could I ask the minister: Exactly what is going on? Are you intending to continue to intervene in the hospital restructuring process, where local people have worked extremely hard for many years to bring it to fruition? Indeed, I would think that the minister would want local solutions to hospital restructuring. Why are you intervening in this way?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I think the honourable member for Nickel Belt's question is precipitated by a meeting that occurred in Ottawa last night with the Ottawa-Carleton Regional District Health Council and Ministry of Health officials. It's my understanding that indeed there was a misunderstanding of what this government's policy is.

We've made it very clear, I've made it very clear—the policy in the four and a half years I was critic remains—that we believe that district health councils are the ears, eyes and conscience of the local community. We want them to conduct the hospital restructuring studies and in no way do we want to interfere in those studies.

I'd be happy if a page would come here, please, to provide the member with a letter I faxed to the chair of the Ottawa-Carleton Regional District Health Council just this morning, clarifying and reaffirming that it is not the intention of this government to interfere in a local process. I'd ask the honourable member to take a look at that letter.

Mr Laughren: I have seen that letter. I appreciate the copy from the minister, but it doesn't answer the question of why he intervened in the Sudbury hospital restructuring that the district health council is trying to accomplish there.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): He sent a letter there too?

Mr Laughren: He wrote a letter there but didn't deny that he was intervening. As a matter of fact, it's just a given that he's already intervened in the process in Sudbury.

Could I ask the minister if he's going to honour the commitment to the district health councils and to the hospitals and to the communities, the commitment that was made by the previous Minister of Health, that savings that are achieved in the restructuring process will be reinvested in health care in those particular communities?

Hon Mr Wilson: The commitment, indeed the planning framework set out by the previous government, isn't as specific as the former Treasurer wants to let on. That is, the commitment of the previous government and indeed the commitment of this government is that dollars saved from those restructuring studies, once they're fully implemented, will be reinvested into health care.

I have no problem saying that we will not necessarily invest dollar for dollar back in those exact communities. The understanding of the district health councils—and I've clarified this with a number of them—is they know that the dollars will go into health care in the province of Ontario. It's part of our commitment to reinvest.

For example, the issue raised by—and it's a concern of all members: the cardiac waiting list, for example. There is no restructuring in Metro Toronto. You're saying I have to take those dollars, reinvest them strictly in Toronto when all the people of the province benefit from people like Dr Tirone David, when they benefit from those world-class surgeons who happen to be located in Toronto.

So we will be taking reinvestment dollars that we've already identified that come from the health care system and reinvesting them in priority areas. That's our commitment and we're very proud of that commitment.

1500

CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): The Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation recently announced a number of spending reductions in programs administered by her ministry. My riding of Scarborough East is one of the most culturally diverse in the province, and based on the feedback from a number of my constituents, I'd like to know exactly what the minister's position is on cultural diversity in this province.

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): To the honourable member for Scarborough East, this government recognizes the cultural diversity and benefit that this diversity brings to this province. But given the economic climate that we all find ourselves in today, the province can no longer afford to fund the kinds of programs and groups that we have done traditionally in the past. Many of the cultural groups in this province are well established and well suited to play leadership roles in the advancement of their own cultural diversity.

Mr Gilchrist: I thank the minister for her response. That being the case, will the minister please inform this House the ways that her ministry will continue to support cultural diversity in Ontario?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Windsor-Sandwich is out of order.

Hon Ms Mushinski: We will work with cultural groups in this province to continue our support of their diversity. For example, we'll support those groups that are in the best position to help new residents of this province, community-based organizations which are best suited to help newcomers fully participate in the province's society.

SEAWAY VALLEY FARMERS' ENERGY CO-OPERATIVE

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I would like to mention that it's National Co-op Week and I would especially like to applaud Seaway Valley ethanol cooperative in our area, which has 2,000 members and \$5 million in shares. Their goal is to construct a \$40-million to \$45-million facility for ethanol and byproducts. Many jobs will be created, along with hundreds of indirect opportunities and transportation and private sector jobs.

The project was made possible by a \$3-million commitment from the former government in April, which all parties supported. However, I have heard the new Minister of Agriculture say that he's not 100% certain he will honour this agreement but he will look at the ministry.

One week ago the minister commented in the House that he was surprised no opposition members had made any comments on agriculture. Well, Minister, my first question is—and I have lots of them—can you provide a firm answer here and now: When will you honour the \$3-million commitment to the Seaway ethanol co-op?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I want to thank my colleague from Cornwall for his support. I have been a promoter and a very, very strong supporter of the Seaway Valley energy co-op for many years. As a matter of fact, I was in the farm kitchen the night it was initially thought up. It was in Glengarry county.

I have been supportive of that industry, as the honourable member knows, for many years and I continue to support the industry. I certainly hope that in the near future there will be an announcement that the \$3 million is indeed going to go to Seaway Valley. I do not have the legal interpretation of that today.

Mr Cleary: Before the election I worked with the former Minister of Agriculture and Food to make sure that this project became reality. Prior to this minister getting that position, when I was in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in 1989, we had people up from the States telling us how to go about an ethanol project. My only regret is that the former minister's commitment did not happen more quickly.

Since June 8, I have gone back over the records to make sure the new minister's commitment is there. I was relieved to note that when in opposition, the minister said:

"Fuel ethanol has recognized public benefits."

"It would boost employment in the Cornwall area."

The project "has my full support and encouragement."

"I strongly urge your support for the proposal."

And even—and this is a direct quote from the letter:

"As the only vocal supporter of fuel ethanol in the Ontario Legislature through the late 1980s...."

I assume then he won't have a problem, from the then member and now minister, to maintain his support.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Mr Cleary: It's time to put your money where your mouth is. Exactly when can the group expect the government's commitment?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: I'm quite sure that the honourable member for Cornwall will know that I was at the coop meeting last night and I spent some time with Mr Atkins, who happens to be the president of the Seaway Valley Farmers' Energy Co-operative, and he knows he has my full and unadulterated support.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: It's amazing, Mr Speaker. These people spent money in a way that was unbelievable and now they're trying to go the other way. I have difficulty understanding, particularly as the official Leader of the Opposition, when Minister of Energy, was not all that supportive of the ethanol industry, and I have correspondence to that effect.

I want to assure my colleague from Cornwall that indeed the ethanol industry has my total support.

CLOSURE OF HALFWAY HOUSES

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): My question is for the Solicitor General and the Minister of Correctional Services. The minister is well-known for his belief in the essence of protecting public safety and he has made speech after speech about the necessity for a law-and-order approach that protects public safety. Yet a couple of weeks ago, without warning, he closed the halfway houses and seemed surprised in this House that anyone would be concerned.

The public is concerned about its own safety and it's concerned about the issue of recidivism; it's concerned about how prisoners are reintegrated into society. The Common Sense Revolution itself said, "With more cooperation and support to private sector initiatives such as the John Howard and Elizabeth Fry societies, more offenders are likely to be successfully integrated back into society."

This minister and this government have slashed support to the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society, they've cut grants that have been available to those societies, they've cut the halfway houses, and I want the minister to explain how he thinks this is going to be protective of public safety.

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): If you compare the track record of the previous government with respect to its commitment to public safety and the initiatives we've undertaken in a very few weeks in office, I think you'll find that the public, very much so, supports the initiatives that have been undertaken by this government with respect to public safety.

I can simply reiterate what I've said in the past with

respect to the closure of halfway houses, CRCs, that they represent only one half of 1% of the offender population in the province on any given day; about 398 beds, I believe. We believe we've come up with a system in terms of the electronic monitoring, plus the risk assessment process, plus the criteria for consideration for electronic monitoring, that is much safer for the public of Ontario, and we feel very comfortable with that position.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Pursuant to standing order 34(a), the member for Lake Nipigon has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Transportation concerning winter maintenance of highways. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Within the context of question period today we had two ministerial statements delivered. I seek unanimous consent of the House for us to respond in the usual fashion to the statements we received today on multiculturalism and on hydro rates.

The Speaker: He's asking for unanimous consent. There is not unanimous consent.

MOTIONS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I would seek unanimous consent of the House to strike committees of the Legislature, move their membership and set up a schedule with regard to committee meetings.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Do we have unanimous consent of the House to do that? Agreed.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I move that, notwithstanding standing order 110(a) and for the duration of the 36th Parliament, no standing or select committee shall consist of more than 14 members.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP NOUVEAUX MEMBRES DES COMITÉS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I move that the membership of the standing committees for this session be as follows:

Standing committee on administration of justice: Mrs Boyd, Mr Chiarelli, Mr Conway, Mr Doyle, Mr Guzzo, Mr Hampton, Mr Hudak, Mr Johnson (Brantford), Mr Klees, Mr Leadston, Mr Martiniuk, Mr Parker, Mr Ramsay, Mr Tilson.

Standing committee on estimates: Mr Barrett, Mr Bisson, Mr Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin), Mr Brown (Scarborough West), Mr Cleary, Mr Clement, Mr Curling, Mr Cordiano, Mr Kells, Mr Martin, Mr Rollins, Mrs Ross, Mr Sheehan, Mr Wettlaufer.

Standing committee on finance and economic affairs: Mr Arnott, Mr Brown (Scarborough West), Ms Castrilli, Mr Chudleigh, Mr Ford, Mr Hudak, Ms Lankin, Mr Kwinter, Mr Martiniuk, Mr Phillips, Mr Sampson, Mr Silipo, Mr Spina, Mr Wettlaufer.

Standing committee on general government: Mr Carroll, Mr Danford, Mr Flaherty, Mr Grandmaître, Mr Hardeman, Mr Kells, Mr Marchese, Mr Maves, Mrs Pupatello, Mr Sergio, Mr Stewart, Mr Tascona, Mr Wood (Cochrane North), Mr Young.

Standing committee on government agencies: Mr Bartolucci, Mr Crozier, Mr Ford, Mr Fox, Mr Gravelle, Mr Johnson (Perth), Mr Kormos, Mr Laughren, Mr Leadston, Mr Martin, Mr Newman, Mr Preston, Mrs Ross, Mr Wood (London South).

Standing committee on the Legislative Assembly: Mr Arnott, Mr Bartolucci, Mr Boushy, Mr Cooke, Mr DeFaria, Mr Froese, Mr Hastings, Mr Grimmett, Mr Johnson (Brantford), Mr Miclash, Mr Morin, Mr O'Toole, Mr Silipo, Mr Stewart.

Standing committee on the Ombudsman: Mrs Caplan, Mr DeFaria, Mr Doyle, Mrs Fisher, Mr Froese, Mr Galt, Mr Hoy, Mr Jordan, Mr Lalonde, Mr Marchese, Mr Parker, Mr Stockwell, Mr VanKoughnet, Mr Wood (Cochrane North).

Standing committee on public accounts: Mr Agostino, Mr Beaubien, Mr Boushy, Mr Carr, Mr Colle, Mr Crozier, Mr Fox, Mr Gilchrist, Mr Hastings, Ms Martel, Mr McGuinty, Mr Pouliot, Mr Skarica, Mr VanKoughnet.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. Would the member take his seat please. The member for Windsor-Riverside has a point of order.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order, in that the government can choose to do what it wishes, but it was clearly communicated to the government House leader's office that we were not prepared to proceed with this motion today on unanimous consent, that this is a substantive motion that requires the motion to be filed and printed and that we were going to proceed with that.

I was not in the chamber. The acting government House leader knows that, knows that this was communicated to the government House leader's office today.

If they want to proceed this way, I can tell you this is going to cause great problems. They can proceed the way it was agreed to on the phone, that there was not going to be unanimous consent, and we can have that kind of straightforward, open relationship where we communicate our views with one another, or we can constantly not communicate with one another. If that's the case, the current member who's speaking knows what that means over the next four years.

The Speaker: I've heard the honourable member. I asked for unanimous consent as Speaker; I heard unanimous consent. The member can proceed.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, I am asking for unanimous consent that the acting government House leader proceed with the agreement we had, that this was not going to proceed—

The Speaker: The member is out of order.

Mr Cooke: I'm asking for unanimous—

The Speaker: You're out of order. I recognize the member for Carleton.

Hon Mr Sterling: In accordance with rule 106, the committees are to be struck within the first 10 sessional days of the Legislature. This is the 10th sessional day, and therefore I feel obliged to continue, as consent was given by this Legislature.

Standing committee on regulations and private bills: Mr Barrett, Mr Bisson, Mr Boushy, Mr Hastings, Mr O'Toole, Mr Pettit, Mr Pouliot, Mrs Pupatello, Mr Rollins, Mr Ruprecht, Mr Sergio, Mr Shea, Mr Sheehan, Mr Smith.

Standing committee on resources development: Mr Baird, Mr Carroll, Mr Christopherson, Mr Chudleigh, Ms Churley, Mr Duncan, Mrs Fisher, Mr Gilchrist, Mr Hoy, Mr Lalonde, Mr Maves, Mr Murdoch, Mr Ouellette, Mr Tascona.

Standing committee on social development: Mr Agostino, Mrs Ecker, Mr Gerretsen, Mr Gravelle, Mrs Johns, Mr Jordan, Mr Laughren, Mrs Munro, Mr Newman, Mr Patten, Mr Pettit, Mr Preston, Mr Smith, Mr Wildman.

The Speaker: Mr Sterling moves that the membership of the standing committees for the session be as follows—dispense?

Interjections: No, read it.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): If you guys want to play these games, that's what it means.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Standing committee on administration of justice: Mrs Boyd, Mr Chiarelli, Mr Conway, Mr Doyle, Mr Guzzo, Mr Hampton, Mr Hudak, Mr Johnson (Brantford), Mr Klees, Mr Leadston, Mr Martiniuk, Mr Parker, Mr Ramsay, Mr Tilson.

Standing committee on estimates: Mr Barrett, Mr Bisson, Mr Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin), Mr Brown (Scarborough West), Mr Cleary, Mr Clement, Mr Curling, Mr Cordiano, Mr Kells, Mr Martin, Mr Rollins, Mrs Ross, Mr Sheehan, Mr Wettlaufer.

Standing committee on finance and economic affairs: Mr Arnott, Mr Brown (Scarborough West), Ms Castrilli, Mr Chudleigh, Mr Ford, Mr Hudak, Ms Lankin, Mr Kwinter, Mr Martiniuk, Mr Phillips, Mr Sampson, Mr Silipo, Mr Spina, Mr Wettlaufer.

Standing committee on general government: Mr Carroll, Mr Danford, Mr Flaherty, Mr Grandmaître, Mr Hardeman, Mr Kells, Mr Marchese, Mr Maves, Mrs Pupatello, Mr Sergio, Mr Stewart, Mr Tascona, Mr Wood (Cochrane North), Mr Young.

Standing committee on government agencies: Mr Bartolucci, Mr Crozier, Mr Ford, Mr Fox, Mr Gravelle, Mr Johnson (Perth), Mr Kormos, Mr Laughren, Mr Leadston, Mr Martin, Mr Newman, Mr Preston, Mrs Ross, Mr Wood (London South).

Standing committee on the Legislative Assembly: Mr Arnott, Mr Bartolucci, Mr Boushy, Mr Cooke, Mr DeFaria, Mr Froese, Mr Hastings, Mr Grimmett, Mr Johnson (Brantford), Mr Miclash, Mr Morin, Mr O'Toole, Mr Silipo, Mr Stewart.

Standing committee on the Ombudsman: Mrs Caplan, Mr DeFaria, Mr Doyle, Mrs Fisher, Mr Froese, Mr Galt,

Mr Hoy, Mr Jordan, Mr Lalonde, Mr Marchese, Mr Parker, Mr Stockwell, Mr VanKoughnet, Mr Wood (Cochrane North).

1520

Standing committee on public accounts: Mr Agostino, Mr Beaubien, Mr Boushy, Mr Carr, Mr Colle, Mr Crozier, Mr Fox, Mr Gilchrist, Mr Hastings, Ms Martel, Mr McGuinty, Mr Pouliot, Mr Skarica, Mr VanKoughnet.

Standing committee on regulations and private bills: Mr Barrett, Mr Bisson, Mr Boushy, Mr Hastings, Mr O'Toole, Mr Pettit, Mr Pouliot, Mrs Pupatello, Mr Rollins, Mr Ruprecht, Mr Sergio, Mr Shea, Mr Sheehan, Mr Smith.

Standing committee on resources development: Mr Baird, Mr Carroll, Mr Christopherson, Mr Chudleigh, Ms Churley, Mr Duncan, Mrs Fisher, Mr Gilchrist, Mr Hoy, Mr Lalonde, Mr Maves, Mr Murdoch, Mr Ouellette, Mr Tascona.

Standing committee on social development: Mr Agostino, Mrs Ecker, Mr Gerretsen, Mr Gravelle, Mrs Johns, Mr Jordan, Mr Laughren, Mrs Munro, Mr Newman, Mr Patten, Mr Pettit, Mr Preston, Mr Smith, Mr Wildman.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Those in favour, say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

Mr Rae: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't know why it wouldn't be possible for us to have a debate and a discussion on this question. The question of the establishment of committees of the House and the approaches being taken by members opposite towards the work of these committees I would think is an extremely substantive matter and one which I'm sure the House would, in due course and after a substantive reflection, want to consider.

I certainly plan to speak to this question because of its importance for members of the House.

The Speaker: We'll have a debate. The member for Carleton, anything?

Hon Mr Sterling: Yes, I do have something to say, Mr Speaker. Both the government and the loyal opposition had the membership of their committees ready for some period of time, and we were waiting for the third party to strike their membership. Therefore, as a matter of courtesy we waited for them to put forward their names.

They were hesitating in giving us their names, and then they said yesterday that they would prefer to have them considered at caucus meeting this morning. This did not leave the necessary time for us to give notice as required under the standing orders and that is why I asked for consent.

When Mr Cooke was asked yesterday by one of the assistants of the Legislature if he would consent to this order being considered, he agreed that he would allow it to go on consent. He changed his mind this morning. I assumed, when I asked the question today, when I asked for unanimous consent, that he again had changed his mind back to giving consent to have this motion called.

Therefore, the reason we were unable to give notice—and I would not have had to ask consent—was in fact caused by the New Democratic Party caucus itself.

I felt obliged to complete the order and move the next motion—as you know, I have consent as well to move the times for when the schedule of these committee meetings will take place—because under our standing order 106 it says, "Within the first 10 sessional days following the commencement of each session in a Parliament the membership of the following standing committees shall be appointed for the duration of the session."

Therefore, I believe it is incumbent upon the government House leader, and I'm speaking in his absence, to live within the spirit of the standing orders. This being the 10th sessional day since we began this session, I thought it prudent that we go ahead with naming the committees, naming the committee schedule and setting it forth.

That is the background behind this particular matter. I believe that members of this Legislature want to know what committees they're sitting on and therefore it should be placed in the form of an order, which has been put forward today, which you have read and I have read, and upon which there is now a debate.

Mr Rae: I want to take this opportunity to raise some questions that we have on this side of the House with respect to how it is that this government intends to proceed with the program called the Common Sense Revolution and the amount of consultation and discussion it plans to carry out in response to questions and concerns that have been raised by many members of the public with respect to their program.

One of the most frequently heard criticisms I hear, and not only from tried and true New Democrats or members of the Liberal Party, with respect to the approach that's being taken by this government, is not only a concern about its ideological direction, a concern which I spoke to directly—

Hon Mr Sterling: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like the honourable leader of the third party to speak on the motion with regard to the people who are involved on the committees.

The Speaker: The leader of the third party has the floor

Mr Rae: Mr Speaker, the member for Carleton and I go back a long way, and if he wants to harass and prevent me from speaking by virtue of constant interruption, I can handle that. I've been around this game long enough. But I do want to raise directly on the floor of the House today for the consideration of the House some of the concerns people have with respect to the willingness of this government to listen and the willingness of this government to use the membership of the committees as a way of informing itself about the concerns people have with respect to government legislation.

The concern people have about this government, as I said before I was interrupted, if only briefly, by the intervention from the member for Carleton, is not simply a concern about ideological direction. It's also a concern

about process. When we discuss the establishment of committees and the working of these committees, above all we're dealing with questions of process, questions which the member for Carleton himself has been involved in for many years as an opposition member, as a new minister in the Davis government when he was one of the main protagonists on behalf of freedom of information legislation, and on many, many occasions when I know he's expressed his personal interest and concern about the workings of committees, about the responsibilities of committees and about the willingness of governments to listen to concerns and to criticisms which come from the public with respect to legislation.

I think this question of the style, the temperament, the willingness of this government to listen in the face of concerns which are being raised is going to prove to be one of the major, major issues in the politics of this province in the years of the Harris government to come.

I have heard it said by the Premier, I've heard it said by ministers in government, I've heard it said by many individual members: Their view is that the process of consultation is one that took place prior to June 8 and that there is now no need for the government to use the committees of the House to listen to the concerns of the public. I've heard it said that this is why the government's feeling is that it can move, it can cut welfare rates by nearly 22% without a breath of consultation, without a breath of discussion; it can deal with labour legislation, which is, as my colleague from Hamilton has pointed out, some 132 pages long, without for an instant considering the need for a full public debate and an active public consultation.

1530

I want to deal directly with this process and this question of how it is that the committees are going to work; for example, the standing committee on resources development, which would in the ordinary course of events be the committee that would deal with the issue of Bill 7.

I want to take issue with something that the Minister of Labour said today in response to questions from my colleague the member for Hamilton Centre. The Minister of Labour said, "Well, the former government didn't listen, and we're not going to listen." I want to take some issue with that, because I want to say directly to the members opposite that if you look at the process which was followed by our government with respect to labour relations reform, you will see a striking and startling contrast to the process which is being suggested by the government with respect to the establishment of committees, to their membership and to their willingness to listen.

We started out with two drafting committees, from labour and from management. We asked them to come forward with particular recommendations. Those recommendations were published. They became public documents. They became a matter of public concern and public debate.

We then had a process by which the ministry brought forward some suggested changes in a white paper, which white paper was considered, discussed, debated. Efforts were made formally and informally to try to reach a broader consensus. Efforts were made in response to the concerns that were present to try to find a consensus.

The government then produced legislation, and what did the Conservative Party in opposition insist on the very day that legislation was brought down? The opposition at that time, the Conservative Party which is now in government, insisted at that time that there be a process of discussion, that there be hearings, that there be committees, that there be consultation, that there be research, that there be studies and that work be done.

My friend from Etobicoke, who has magically moved his chair so he can be closer to the centre of power, something which we all understand his aspiration to do—and we can share his frustration at being outside the pale, outside the sacred circle in which all decisions are made. It's a circle which we understand is very small indeed, very tiny. I say with respect to the members who are in the House listening to what I have to say that I share, I'm sure, their sense of frustration as they see things happening and wonder how it could be that it took place, what was the source of the information, how could it be that it happened.

To come back to the point on the standing committee on resources development, our response to this was to establish hearings; our response was to let people come forward. Upon a conclusion of hearings in which people's views were heard on all sides, the legislation was amended.

My colleagues who were with me in caucus and in cabinet at that time can recall the very intense discussion and debate which took place within us as to which amendments we should consider, as to how they would be considered, the pros and cons, the back and forth. That is the process by which decisions are made.

Now it's a messy process. It's not perfect, because it's not driven simply by one authority, it's not driven simply by one sacred document, it's not driven simply by the holy text of the Common Sense Revolution; it's one in which people listen, in which there is give and take and in which there is part of a public discussion.

I well remember when the Minister of Finance in our government brought forward his first budget. The members of the Conservative Party insisted that that budget be subjected to public hearings, and we agreed. We agreed in a move that was unprecedented. We said: "We have nothing to fear from public hearings. We have nothing to fear from a committee that travels, that gets around the province, that listens to the concerns of people. We have nothing to fear of that at all. In fact, we have everything to gain from that."

So it is that I think the fundamental question which is going to come back to haunt this government and the members of the Conservative Party again and again and again is, there is no point in establishing committees of this House and there is no point in establishing the membership of the committees of this House if the government is not prepared to let those committees do their job: to listen to the public and to respond to the concerns which the public has about the workings of government.

We have asked repeatedly with respect to the first major piece of legislation, Bill 7, of this government that it respond, that it tell us what it is intending to do, that it allow the committee to travel, that it allow there to be hearings, that it allow the process in which it will admit, "Yes, that was a mistake. Yes, we need to correct it. Yes, there was a drafting error. Oh yes, there was something done by inadvertence," or, "Now we understand that there are unintended consequences to the changes which we're making, and these unintended consequences need to be dealt with in a process of give and take," which is what the parliamentary process is to be all about.

I think all of us share a concern, not simply with the ideological direction of this government, a concern which I think is going to be increasingly shared across the province of Ontario, but about the willingness of the government to listen.

We had today a minister of the crown who was not prepared to admit in a written statement in which he intended to fully disclose the issue surrounding his misleading comments the week before—he was not prepared to disclose in the document itself a couple of very simple facts. He was not prepared to disclose, and still isn't, as far as I know, though he may be because there's no time limitation on questions in the scrum. He may in fact eventually come to the conclusion that he has to come clean.

He still hasn't told us how it would be that a group of civil servants would get together on August 29 and decide to draft a series of changes to regulations, as if they would simply get around and have a pizza party and say: "Oh, we've got a good idea. Let's change some regulations." They obviously acted on the basis of instruction. They obviously acted on the basis of direction. Civil servants in the middle of the summer aren't going to be thinking of ways of dreaming up regulatory change unless they're instructed to do so. Everyone knows that.

Why wouldn't the minister have the courage, why wouldn't he have the straightforwardness to say: "I asked the staff to prepare changes and it was on my instruction that these changes were made. I'm the person who signed the document that went to cabinet and I carry and take full responsibility for the fact that I made this mistake, that this mistake was made not simply under my watch, but I signed a document that I hadn't read, I signed a document that I didn't fully understand and I carried that document through cabinet"?

Why wouldn't the Premier stand up and say: "I participated in a cabinet meeting that approved a series of regulations. I wasn't aware what was in them. It was a mistake. I will personally ensure that it doesn't happen again"? Why wouldn't he say that? Well, they haven't said it, and what concerns me is that because of the determination of this government to act on an ideological basis, the mistake—and clearly it was a mistake—that was made by the Ministry of Community and Social Services is going to be repeated again and again and again, because this is a government that will not listen, this is a government that is not prepared to listen, this is a government that has made up its mind; and there's

nothing more dangerous than a government that has made up its mind and is not prepared to listen.

A welfare cut of 22% across the board—greater than even their own officials said was necessary to reach the financial targets—in which they went out one day and said, "We'll do it. We won't affect disabled people," and now we have people who are disabled in their teens who are being cared for by their parents, and their benefits have been cut.

Did they intend to do that? I don't know. Were they advised by their officials that this would be the effect of the regulatory change? I don't know. But I can say to members opposite who are listening to this discussion, these are very, very basic questions about how wise governments act and how it is important to at least attempt to establish a consensus.

1540

Having said that, let me be the first to admit that at the end of the day the government has to govern. But the question is, what is the end of the day? Is it at the conclusion of a process in which everyone's had their say, or is it because people have simply sat down and said, "Well, this is what's in the CSR and that's the way it's going to be"?

As I said in my response to the speech from the throne, this is a very, very fundamental question as to how we are going to be able to get along in this House for the next several years. How are we going to be able to carry on the public business of this province if it is the view of the army across the way that they've got the votes, they don't need to listen, they don't need to learn, they don't need to consult, they don't need to talk, they don't need to bring people in, they don't need to change their minds, they don't need to admit that there might be something wrong in the Common Sense Revolution? They are simply going to plow ahead regardless of the consequences.

When I look down the list of the membership of the committees, when I look down the considerations that have been made and when I look down the list of the understandings that have been reached with respect to the membership of these committees, I still question the willingness of this government to really listen and learn.

We know that my colleague from Nickel Belt is going to be a member of the standing committee on government agencies, and he'll be joined by my colleague the member for Sault Ste Marie as well as my colleague from Welland-Thorold, and that'll be a happy and effective trio. My colleague from Mississauga is enjoying the thought of those three together. I look at some of the other membership of the committee and I think it'll be a very lively set of discussions that take place, knowing the affection and high regard that all these members have for each other.

But I would say to you, Mr Speaker, already in response to the charge of the 10 wasted years—which is one of the great myths, one of the great pieces of mythology that is being persistently spread and repeated by the members opposite—look at the contrast in the membership already of people who are being named to patronage

positions, to government appointments in senior government agencies, already the changes that have been introduced, already the things that are being put in place which clearly indicate that in 10 years the Conservative Party in this province has forgotten nothing and has learned nothing.

I look at the member opposite from Mississauga and I think of the questions that she raised about every single appointment that was made. I would ask her, on a fairminded basis, she will know perfectly well that when it comes to the Social Assistance Review Board, we established a process, as we did with every single government agency, in which, at my personal insistence, I said to the person whom I appointed as in charge of appointments—we set up a process of consultation which was literally unprecedented in the history of the province.

In a book that went out to every library, to every municipal council, in which jobs that had previously only gone to the anointed Tories or the anointed Liberals, we said that, yes, there will be New Democrats among them because, Lord knows, there are some New Democrats who we believe are qualified to do certain jobs and we believe it should be permitted and permissible for them to be appointed.

But we also said that there will be Conservatives, as we appointed a former Conservative to head up the Liquor Control Board of the province of Ontario, my colleague Mr Brandt, who served with us in opposition, and he's done a very effective job. I look forward to hearing from him, for example, when it comes to the question of the privatization of the LCBO, which is to be found in the Common Sense Revolution.

I contrast that, where we said to every chairman, "We want your views, we want your list, we will agree to put forward any names to you, you put forward any names, and there will be a full discussion of the acceptability of who they are." We appointed Liberals, we appointed Conservatives, we appointed New Democrats. For the most part, we appointed people who had no particular party affiliation whatsoever, because most people in the province don't necessarily subscribe to any particular political party and see themselves as neutral.

Instead of which, what do the members opposite do? What did the minister do? The Minister of Community and Social Services decides to appoint some of the most partisan, some of the most strong-willed—

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Well, somebody did.

Mr Rae: Well, we don't know whether it was him or not, or whether he signed—perhaps it was another mistake. I thought perhaps he'd come forward and say: "I hadn't actually read that name. I wasn't sure it was coming forward. I was promised that she wasn't on that list."

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Evelyn Dodds.

Mr Rae: Evelyn Dodds, the other Conservative appointments that have been named: former candidates, defeated candidates.

At some point, the concern is not only the fact that this is a government that is determined to return to the bad

old days in terms of partisanship and in terms of patronage appointments. We've seen it again with respect to the way they handed out the contract on the government negotiations, where we insisted that the grievance work be handed out fairly. We said to the law firms that had been there for a long, long time, that had had a monopoly on it: Under our government, no monopoly. Government advertising, no monopoly. In every case, a rigid process; in every case, a tendering process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): You were doing extremely well at the beginning. I'd like you to stay on topic, which is on the motion. Thank you.

M. Rae: Monsieur le Président, je suis déterminé de rester, mais il faut que je vous parle directement.

J'espère que vous êtes d'accord avec moi que la substance du travail des comités et de l'approche du gouvernement face à son programme et sa volonté d'écouter les membres de l'opposition, sa volonté d'écouter les gens de la province, est une question substantielle dont nous avons le droit comme membres, comme députés, de discuter. Nous avons le droit, même l'obligation comme députés, de parler directement sur cette question, et je crois qu'au moment où le gouvernement décide de présenter les noms des députés qui seront les membres de ces comités, il est permis au chef d'un parti de parler directement sur la question du travail de ces comités.

La question, c'est, est-ce que le gouvernement est vraiment prêt à nous écouter ? Est-ce que le gouvernement est vraiment prêt non seulement à écouter les députés, mais à écouter le public qui veut s'exprimer sur ces questions ? Je pense que c'est une question qui est dans le cadre de notre débat. Si j'ai tort je suis prêt, naturellement, à accepter le jugement de M. le Président, parce que j'ai le respect non seulement pour lui personnellement mais pour son travail et son poste. Mais je pense que la question que nous touchons aujourd'hui est absolument fondamentale.

Let me return to this question. We have, over the socalled 10 lost years that the members speak of opposite what did we do in the 10 lost years?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Just the last five.

Mr Rae: The member from Kingston is a little uneasy about that as well, but he should know that back in 1985—

Interjection.

Mr Rae: No. Again, the Liberal Party did not form a government in 1985 because of spontaneous combustion, I say to the member. It was not a process in which miraculously the Liberal Party was elevated to office. The Liberal Party was put in office in 1985 because the membership of this party decided that it was time to make a change and because we could agree on a program.

A substantial part of that program—and I've had no thanks for that move for the last 10 years, not a word of gratitude from the Liberals for that move, but I'm used to that. I do not expect that in my lifetime. But what I do expect is for members to recall that a good deal of what was determined in 1985 was that we would change the

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way the House did business, that we would open up the membership of committees in the House.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): And we did.

Mr Rae: And we did it. That we would open up the process of nomination to committees, and we did it; that we would accept a democratization, and we did it; that the names of those appointed—and I see the member for Carleton listening intently. He will know, because when he was in opposition he was totally in favour of this, that every single name that was proposed by the government would go to the committee and would be considered. That's a process that's been well accepted and well understood as to how that would take place and how it would happen: that there would be a process of negotiation and discussion; that we would give members of the House a role and a real job to do.

I say again, as I said last week in the speech from the throne, I am enormously proud of the fact that we ended 42 years of one-party rule in this House in 1985, and I am truly saddened by the extent to which these people opposite don't really believe in a Common Sense Revolution. What they really believe in is a commonsense restoration. It's like the return of the Bourbons in 1815 or in 1830. As I said, they have learned nothing and they have forgotten nothing. There isn't a thing that's happened in the intervening years that they are prepared to recognize has a moment of goodness, and yet I see the Minister of Health opposite—imagine. How would it be possible? Ten lost years and today he opened the greatest cancer hospital ever built in the history of the province of Ontario, a leading research centre. Somehow the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, and all the planning that we did for health care, we managed to build that hospital in those 10 lost years, and I'm very proud of the fact that we were able to do it and that we did it. No thanks to many of the comments made opposite.

Mr Speaker, I want to say to you, sir, as I've said before, the fundamental question—

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): When are you going to pay for that hospital, Bob?

Mr Rae: The member opposite, Mr Ford from Etobicoke, is expressing his concern and he and I share a riding. We share a boundary and we share the mellifluous river of the Humber. It is the border between our two ridings.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Could you explain "mellifluous"?

Mr Rae: Mellifluous. The member for Mississauga would perhaps be more familiar with Sixteen Mile Creek as a similar such estuary, but I would say to the member from Etobicoke, who's going to pay for it? The answer is, we all are. Through our taxes we will pay for that hospital, as we shall pay for all the other things that need to be done. I would say to the member—

Interjections.

Mr Rae: —if he's shaking his head, then let him speak directly to those who will benefit from that research, not just the hospital, but the research centres that we've established across the province, the work

that's been done to expand service and treatment for cancer patients in every single part of the province. These are things which need to be done, these are things which must be done and these are things which we did and which, if the government opposite wants to maintain any sense of trust with the public, it will have to do as well.

The question the government has to answer and the question the Minister of Labour has to answer is why, given the fact that we were prepared to carry on a process of discussion, we were prepared to try and find a consensus, we were prepared to refer matters to groups of people, to have intensive discussions—I had them in my office; I had them privately; we had them publicly; the Minister of Labour had them privately and publicly as we strove to find that conclusion—why it would be that the membership of the committee on resources, which membership we are considering today, would not be willing to give the committee the instruction that it will travel, that it will open itself to a genuine hearings process and that it will be prepared to consider amendments and proposals which come forward because of the unintended consequences of the propositions that are being made by the government in its legislation.

The Minister of Labour made a very interesting admission today in the House. In answer to a question from the member for Hamilton Centre, she said, "Oh, I'm already meeting with people and we're already making changes." Well, which changes—

Mr Laughren: Which people?

Mr Rae: —and which people is she meeting with—

Mr Pouliot: Why is she unwilling to—

Mr Rae: —and why would she be unwilling—if she's willing to meet with these people privately, why wouldn't she be willing to have these people come to the committee? If they're in Ottawa—I know for the Minister of Health Ottawa's a long, long way and that for him a trip to Ottawa is an absolutely unprecedented step, but for most of us it's a very natural thing to do. I met with Dr Keon on a number of occasions. I'm sure that my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, when she was the minister, met with Dr Keon. He's a great physician, a great doctor, a heck of a hockey player—

Mr Laughren: A great senator.

Mr Rae: A great senator. But I say to the members opposite, this committee, which is going to be considering Bill 7, a matter which is now before the House and will be again tomorrow—we know the subject matter—is going to have to listen to the members who are affected. It is going to have to listen to the women who work in Sudbury and who work in Thunder Bay and who work in Kingston, who are concerned because they're working in industrial plants that are not large and who know what the impacts on them will be of the steps that the government is planning to take; who know that if people can be bused in to take their jobs away, there will be great trouble for them, that their security will be affected.

I must say directly, because I'm convinced that the government has produced this legislation not out of a spirit of wanting to listen to the people but out of a spirit

of pure ideology, that once the members are exposed to the arguments and to the facts on the subject of this change, they will listen again.

What would the objection conceivably be to allowing Dr Meltz, Professor Gunderson, the experts from Kingston—and my colleague from Kingston is listening patiently; he will know that there is an excellent centre for industrial relations in Kingston—

Hon Mr Sterling: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I didn't realize that there would be this much opposition to a pretty routine motion of the House. If the opposition gives me the opportunity, I will withdraw the motion.

Mr Rae: In light of the comments that have been made by my friend from Carleton, I certainly would be prepared to adjourn the debate and return to this discussion, which I'm just getting into, at your earliest convenience.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Rae moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Mr Sterling: I will also not bring forward the motion on which I have consent with regard to the meetings of the committee.

HOUSE SITTING

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I will, however, move the motion, that I believe is a routine motion, that notwithstanding standing order 8(a), the House shall meet at 1:30 pm on Thursday, October 19, 1995.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I move that notwithstanding standing order 96, private members' public business not be considered until Thursday, October 26, 1995, and that the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 1 to 4, inclusive.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PETITIONS

CHILD CARE

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Conservative government through the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario hereby stop cutbacks. Funding cutbacks will affect the availability of professionally run child care programs, resource centres and services for children with special needs."

I have attached my name to that petition as well.

SMOKING AREAS

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I have a petition signed by a large group of people upset with tobacco legislation passed in this House. This petition is signed by over 9,250 people from my riding and neighbouring ridings and reads as follows: "Smokers, are you tired of being discriminated against? Are you tired of being made to feel like second-class citizens? Are you not using a legal product? It's time to stand up and demand equal rights.

"Bill 119 has been passed banning smoking in barbershops, hairdressing salons, old-age homes—many of the elderly residents of these homes fought in the world wars and are now losing their rights they fought for: hospitals

"Do you agree with this happening? If you would like equal areas for smokers and non-smokers in all buildings, please sign below. Perhaps united we can once again feel free. Kill Bill 119."

I sign my own name to this petition.

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KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it states:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials/employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka and in particular the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

I affix my signature to that.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 81% of all driving fatalities are alcohol related;

"Whereas 59% (or 18,000) of the 30,000 total convictions for drunk driving in 1992 involved repeat offenders;

"Whereas the Drinking and Driving in Ontario Statistical Yearbook released by the Ministry of Attorney General's Drinking/Driving Countermeasures Office confirmed that drunk driving is on the rise;

"Whereas drunk driving is the number one killer of young people;

"Whereas the existing measures and penalties have failed to deter chronic drunk drivers from reoffending;

"Whereas driving is a privilege, not a right, and chronic drunk drivers have failed to take their driving responsibilities seriously;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact Margaret Marland's private member's Bill 195, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act, or similar legislation, as soon as possible."

Mr Speaker, had the Legislature sat in the spring I could have tabled this petition then, when I received it, but I'm happy to add my signature to it at this time.

AMALGAMATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): This is a petition that's directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force; the Honour-

able Mike Harris, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable John Snobelen, Minister of Education and Training; and myself. It reads:

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the amalgamation of the Kenora Board of Education with any of its neighbouring public boards. One size does not fit all.

"The distances between communities in northern Ontario are too great for school boards to function properly if they are amalgamated as proposed in the interim report of the School Board Reduction Task Force. The increased costs for travel and communication alone will more than likely offset any savings realized through amalgamation.

"We do not believe amalgamation will improve the quality of education in our schools; in fact, it may do more harm than good. We want to retain the local control of our schools through our elected board of trustees."

I have attached my name to that petition as well.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): I have a petition signed by 129 employees of the regional Niagara public health department regarding the plea bargain of Karla Homolka. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, are in agreement with the introduction of a motion calling for Karla Homolka to be brought before the courts again for her role in the sex slayings of Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy. We also support the proposal that her prior plea bargain with the crown be declared null and void."

CHILD CARE

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I have a petition, again to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Conservative government, through the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as follows:

"That the government of Ontario hereby stop cutbacks. Funding cutbacks will affect availability of professionally run child care programs, resource centres and services for children with special needs."

It's signed by a good number of constituents from Kenora and I too have attached my name to that petition.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MOTOR VEHICLE FUEL PRICING ACT, 1995 LOI DE 1995 SUR L'ÉTABLISSEMENT DES PRIX DU CARBURANT POUR VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

Mr Chiarelli moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 10, An Act respecting the Price of Motor Vehicle Fuel and protecting Whistleblowers in the Motor Vehicle Fuel Industry / Projet de loi 10, Loi concernant le prix du carburant pour véhicules automobiles et visant à protéger les dénonciateurs dans l'industrie du carburant pour véhicules automobiles.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Do you wish to make any statement?

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): I'll read several paragraphs from the explanatory notes. It'll be very short.

The main purpose of the bill is to ensure that retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers of motor vehicle fuel be accountable to the public with respect to the pricing of the fuel. The bill would establish the commission on motor vehicle fuel prices to monitor and report to the minister on pricing practices in the province with respect to motor vehicle fuel and to conduct inquiries into pricing practices on order of the minister.

Section 6 would prohibit a person from conspiring to increase or decrease the price of motor vehicle fuel or the retailer margin with respect to motor vehicle fuel.

Section 7 would require retailers of motor vehicle fuel to sell a type of motor vehicle fuel at the same price at every retail outlet owned or operated by the retailer in the province.

Section 8 provides for exceptions to the province-wide pricing rule upon order of the commission.

Section 9 provides whistleblower protection to employees.

Lastly, sections 12 and 13 would create certain offences for contravention of the act.

OPPOSITION DAY

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr Rae moved opposition day motion number 2:

Whereas the Common Sense Revolution states that "our obligation to those in need is even greater in the case of our children"; and

Whereas the Common Sense Revolution also notes that "children living in poverty suffer from significantly higher infant mortality rates, lower life expectancies and tend to receive poor nutrition and education"; and

Whereas Mike Harris's government is hurting kids who live on welfare through cuts in welfare benefits, because 41% of the people living on welfare are children; and

Whereas the 22% cut in welfare benefits hurts children most of all—children who will have to do without the food, clothing or adequate housing they need, children who have no way to fight back against the cuts; and

Whereas Mike Harris's government is hurting kids who need day care by cutting the funding for day care provided through Jobs Ontario Training, so parents can't look for work or take job training; and

Whereas this punishes families trying to help themselves and makes safe and dependable day care for their kids less accessible; and

Whereas Mike Harris's government is hurting kids who need extra help—abused children, children with disabilities, children from troubled homes—by cutting the budget for services like children's aid societies, children's mental health centres and second-stage housing for women and children seeking refuge from domestic violence and abuse; and

Whereas Mike Harris's government is hurting kids and their families by eliminating jobs, by making it harder for them to make ends meet and harder to get training to get back to work; and

Whereas Mike Harris's government is cancelling early childhood education pilot projects and making junior kindergarten less accessible for children across the province, despite a generation's evidence that education supports in the early years pay huge positive dividends later in children's lives;

Therefore, this House calls on the Mike Harris government to stop hurting Ontario's children, primarily by restoring the benefits it has seized by means of welfare rate cuts, but also by restoring the funding cuts it has made to child care provision, to training, and to social service agencies in the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

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Mr Bob Rae (York South): I rise in my place to speak on this motion, and I do so with the determination to make not simply a case that's based on the needs of children in this generation and the fact that what the government is doing is making the condition of our children worse, certainly than it's been and far worse than it needs to be, but I do it in the name as well of the long-term economic health and wellbeing of the province of Ontario.

I think there is a growing consensus in our society, as opposed to some other societies that I can think of, a consensus that I've seen at work in the work of the Premier's Council of this province, a council which was gotten rid of by the Tory government, a consensus that has emerged I think in a great many businesses, a consensus that has emerged in the many, many places of work and a consensus that I think we need to try to find in this House. It's a consensus that was partly expressed even in some of the words of the Common Sense Revolution when it stated, "Children living in poverty suffer from significantly higher infant mortality rates, lower life expectancies and tend to receive poor nutrition and education."

I think the most damaging charge that has been made, is being made and will be made against this government is that in its determination to follow the iron letter of the Common Sense Revolution, it is making life worse for the most vulnerable citizens in the province, and those most vulnerable are our children.

I said at the close of the speech that I gave in response to the speech from the throne that we can only define and find true prosperity in this province when the least among us has nothing to fear, and I think it's fair to say that the great debate which needs to happen in Canada and in many countries, but certainly with us, is not so much a broad philosophical debate between different systems of government and systems of economic thought and systems of economic organization, but rather the issue must be as to how it is that we can build an economy that is efficient, that respects the market, respects the need to be efficient, respects the need to find a balance and at the same time not abandon our most vulnerable people to even greater inequality and greater hardship.

I think it's fair to say that the economic world in which we live is one in which, if allowed to work without any attempt to make it work better, the rich will do very well, they will continue to get richer, and the poor and the vulnerable will continue to be left on their own, and I think if you look at the evidence from the United Kingdom, the evidence from the United States and

now the evidence coming in for Canada, the evidence is overwhelming that in the 1980s and indeed in the early 1990s, the gap between the rich and the poor did not diminish, it grew even greater, that the condition of those who were vulnerable deteriorated and the condition of those who were well off dramatically and substantially improved.

Members opposite would like us to believe that the last 10 years reflected a time in which the government sector grew exponentially, in which the wealthy were somehow held back and in which there was all sorts of largess distributed to the poor, in which their condition was dramatically improved.

Would that that were so. When the record of the last while is looked at, I think what will be said is that in a period of very difficult economic change, we held the line on behalf of those who were the most vulnerable and we prevented them from completely going under in the face of very substantial change in our economic life, but I think it must also be said that there is still much that needs to be done to ensure that our children are protected, that our children are taken care of and that our children do not suffer as a result of the economic condition which is affecting our society.

What will be said of the last six months, six months in which a government was elected on the false premise that it was possible to carry out the tax promises of the Common Sense Revolution without dramatically affecting the condition of life of ordinary people?

The government was elected on an illusion, an illusion that: "People, you can have your health care; you can have all your programs. Children will be better protected; children will be taken care of. All of this will be done, but we will still proceed with the cut" in areas which were described as, quote, non-priority areas, in which non-priority funding alone would be affected. The government opposite promised that they could find billions and billions of dollars in government waste, but no one would really feel it because there are only a few who are benefiting from the, quote, waste that was out there.

In one of their more shortsighted moves, one of the first things the government did was to abolish the Premier's Council, which council was at work on an agenda for children, which council was at work in bringing business, labour, the universities and government together in an understanding that the cuts that are made in children's services today are the cuts that will hurt our economy tomorrow.

Whereas the Tory mind sees the economy in one corner and society and social problems over in some other, what we continue to need is an understanding that we are all part of one another and that if we create more poverty among our young people, if we create more despair among our young people, if we create more hardship among our young people, we are sowing problems and we are sowing difficulties and we are creating antagonisms and hurt and injury for which we will pay in subsequent generations.

Every single study that has been done, every analysis that has been made, shows clearly that children who grow

up in poverty are more likely to get sick and to get ill. They are more likely to do poorly in school. They are more likely to lose hope in their teens. They are more likely to drop out. They are more likely to take to crime. They are more likely to be marginalized in the economy. They are more likely to become a net cost to all of us and to continue a pattern of pain and injury which is now inflicted on them.

That evidence is overwhelming. It is hard, factual evidence. It is not simply an appeal to emotion that we are making; it is an appeal to the self-interest of each and every one of us. Do our businessmen want to live in a world in which they will have to live behind guarded gates? Do our businessmen want to live in a world where they cannot go downtown in the evening because of fear of the contrast between rich and poor?

It was a great Conservative, Benjamin Disraeli, who spoke with eloquence of what was taking place in the Victorian England in which he was living and working. He spoke with eloquence of the fact that around him there were growing up two nations, rich and poor, and there were two nations who were living more and more separately and apart. He understood that the historic task of the Conservative Party in his lifetime was to produce one nation in which rich and poor would understand what it is they owed each other, what their connection was to one another, and that they were all members of the same family.

I see in this province a Tory party which has not learned the lesson of Burke, which has not learned the lesson of Disraeli, which has not even learned the lesson of William Davis, and that is that unless you maintain a sense of proportion and balance and care and compassion, you will create two provinces. You will create a province for the rich and a province for the poor, a province in which the poor are increasingly marginalized and set aside and in which the rich continue to do very well.

In fact, under the tax policies introduced by this government, of which we are told and promised we're going to see the first instalment in the new year, we will see wealthy parents and wealthy families receiving windfalls in the thousands of dollars. All those windfalls will not save one shelter, all those windfalls will not pay for one children's aid society social worker to be able to do the job that he or she needs to do. This is where we part company. We part company with a government which says that its first priority is to give a tax cut of some \$7,000 to someone making over \$75,000 and to take food off the table from some of the most vulnerable in our society.

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I want to say this to the members opposite: If they had said, "We want to cut the benefit to the single employable and we want to put all that money into a job creation program, we want to put all that money into putting people back to work," I might have said, "Well, I don't agree with the determination to cut back on people's living benefits, but I can understand the logic of what they were trying to do." I would say: "Well now, at least they're heading in a direction that I can understand. At least they're doing something that makes sense."

If they were even to have said: "We're going to cut the benefit, but we are going to ensure that we're going to expand child care, we're going to expand training, we're going to expand Jobs Ontario, only we won't call it Jobs Ontario because that was an NDP program; we'll give it another name," I wouldn't even have objected to them changing the name as long as they understand that in every industrialized country there is a consensus that for those who are now on unemployment insurance or on welfare, you've got to do something to get rid of the incentives that keep people on welfare, which we did with the drug program, which we did with our housing programs, which we did with the direction that we were taking on employment. You've got to provide incentives for employers to hire, which we did through Jobs Ontario Training, which we did through the efforts that were made to keep people at work, and you've got to put more money into training, more money into education and more money into child care.

That is the consensus. People say nothing works. Well, some things do work and we know they work. We know that if we deal with the child care needs, if we deal with the training needs, if we deal with the housing needs, if we deal with the education needs, we know that people will choose work every time. Nobody wants to sit at home and get paid for doing nothing for the rest of their lives. That's not the Canadian way. That's not the Ontario way. That's not the common view of most of the people of this province. Most of the people in this province have an urgent desire to work and to provide for their children, and their children need that.

What is so clearly the mark of an ideological government is that this group of people does not understand the self-destructiveness of what they are doing. The money you cut from children today, the services you deprive children of today will come back and hurt and hit all of us tomorrow.

I say this not to appeal to your compassion, because I'm not convinced that there is a surplus of compassion on the other side. Where I want to put the emphasis is on the self-interest. I talked to businessmen, I talked to a senior businessman who acted as an adviser to the Liberal government in Ottawa on their reforms to unemployment insurance and his advice to me—

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise on a point of order because I would think that the present speaker, above anyone else in this House, knows the rules of this House; that is, we are not permitted to impugn motives. He has suggested that the people on the other side of the House do not have compassion and I think that's an unjust impugning of our motives.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Mr Rae. Mr Rae: Have you ruled on the point of order?

The Acting Speaker: You have the floor.

Mr Rae: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would simply say to members, and I return to the point that I made quite simply: You look at the range of cuts that have been made, you look at their indiscriminate nature. You look at the fact that you have a Minister of

Community and Social Services whose advice upon cutting the benefits was first of all to say, "You'll be able to earn it all back"—not true—then, "Oops, sorry. That was a mistake, didn't know that"; then turns around and says, "You can get tuna for 69 cents a can, so buy it in bulk." People whom I know on welfare are not exactly out there buying lots of stuff in bulk these days. Oops.

Then he says of the benefit cut that if it endangers children, the answer would be for the children's aid society to move in and presumably take the children into its care—oops—then turns around and says that the budgets of children's aid societies are being cut in real terms by some 10%, because you've got to take into account that it's happening in the middle of the year. So the very people who are being asked to police the impacts of his welfare cuts he's now saying are going to have their budgets cut.

He's cutting the budget—oops—of the children's mental health centres. He's cutting the budget of second-stage housing, and in his answers today to the questions from the Leader of the Opposition, it was crystal clear to me that he didn't know what second-stage housing was. His answers only referred in a rote form to the shelters which are being funded still by his government—they haven't completely slashed them; they're still being funded though their budgets have been cut and are being held back—but he doesn't understand that at issue is what happens to people once the shelters are full, a problem which again, if I may say so, we dealt with during the accord when we reinitiated and reinvigorated the housing programs of the government and when we carried on with the work that needed to be done.

The Common Sense Revolution says they want to end dependency. They're going to expand dependency. They say they want to improve the condition of children. They've slashed the benefits of children by some 20%. Of the people on welfare, 40% are children—400,000 children. Those are the incomes you've cut by some 20%. How can you stand in your place and say that somehow you have a plan for children? The plan for children that you've demonstrated—400,000 of the neediest among them, 400,000 of the most vulnerable citizens in this province, 400,000 children who are living on \$1,000 or \$1,200 or \$1,500 a month, those are the people this government has decided to single out and attack. And the money they save on the backs of those children they're then going to transfer next year to the people making more than \$40,000 or \$50,000 or \$60,000 or \$75,000 a year. It's a disgrace.

The member for Mississauga South can stand up all she wants and talk all she wants about how she feels personally. I don't know how she feels personally. All I know is that this government is throwing hundreds of thousands of children deeper into poverty, deeper into misery, and we will all reap the impact of that change.

I want to say to members opposite that the price will be paid. We know, for example, from all the studies that have been done that infant mortality rates are double for poor neighbourhoods over wealthy neighbourhoods. We know that death rates due to accidents, suicides and homicides are 10 times greater for poor children than they are for wealthier children. We know that the rate of childhood disability is twice as high for poor children as it is for rich children. We know that school-aged children from low-income families are twice as likely to have a psychiatric disorder, three times as likely to have a conduct disorder than children from other families. We know they're more likely to break out of school, we know they're more likely to have difficulty in school, we know they're more likely to be seen as failures in school and we know that they're more likely to be labelled that way by the world.

These are the people, these are the children who will not have a big impact in terms of their voice. Who speaks for them? They don't attend the banquets and dinners which the Minister of Community and Social Services attends. They don't go to the golf clubs and they don't go to the country clubs. They don't go to the places where the Tory party raises its hundreds of thousands of dollars. They don't have access to a special phone line to a minister's office or a minister's staff. They don't have access to the Premier. They are the most vulnerable and they are the most open.

What does "vulnerable" mean? It means even that their cause may not be that politically popular. We have young kids who are involved in prostitution. We have young kids who are on the street. We have people of whom it's very easy to say, "These are bums, these are the marginals, these are the vagrants, these are kids who should be taught a lesson, these are the young kids who should know better." These are precisely the people for whom a government should say, "We need to support the agencies that are doing this work." What is the evidence we see all around us? Agencies that are being cut, not by simply 2% or 5% or 8%, whose whole core funding is being slashed, whose very reason for survival is being slashed; homes that provide care for single mothers of children who are looking for a way to get back into the workforce, young girls of 16 and 17 who've had kids and who have no means of support for those children.

1630

Have they done the right thing? Governments shouldn't act as some kind of nanny state. Our object as government is not to pass moral judgement on each and every one of us in terms of our private lives or what we've done and what we haven't done. Government has an obligation to ensure that people have a way of getting work, that they have a way of getting education, that they have a way of getting training. Do people have responsibilities themselves? Of course they do. Do people have responsibilities to provide for their own? Of course they do. But do not go back to the rhetoric of the 18th and 19th centuries and try to impose it on the world today.

So in conclusion to my remarks, because I want to give others a chance to participate in this discussion, I say directly to members opposite and to my colleagues, the children of this province are being hurt by this government; they're being hurt directly, they're being hurt intentionally, they're being hurt in a cruel fashion, and they are being hurt so that this government can give a tax benefit to the wealthiest people in our society.

It is the most callous, disgraceful redistribution of

wealth away from the vulnerable that this province has ever seen. We've never seen, in the history of this province, a government that deliberately set out to emiserate a section of the population in the name of giving a handout to the wealthiest. It is the most singularly disgraceful thing that a Minister of Community and Social Services and a Premier have presided over in living memory. They should be ashamed of themselves. It's high time we had all the facts out on the table as to what the real impact of these cuts is really going to be.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'm delighted to have this opportunity today to speak to you about something that's precious to all of us: our children. I'm concerned about our children and their future. The Premier and every member of this government care about our children and their future. They deserve a future filled with opportunities. They do not deserve a future where the opportunities have been wiped out by a legacy of debt.

It's because we're concerned about our future and our children that we're not following in the footsteps of the previous two governments. We're not going to continue the practice of writing blank cheques on our children's futures. Instead, we're very carefully balancing the needs of our children today and tomorrow.

My ministry continues to fund over \$2 billion of community services which help countless thousands of children and their families. We are spending about \$550 million on child care services alone, over half a billion dollars to help meet children's needs today. Some of our money provides about 70,000 subsidized day care spaces for our children. Over 70% of the child care budget, or nearly \$400 million, helps low-income parents to continue to work rather than to rely on welfare.

My government also realizes that services for the most vulnerable children must be protected. My ministry will spend over \$750 million on services for those children in close to 400 separate agencies across the province. This includes funding for children's aid societies, children's mental health facilities and young offender services.

Our ministry also provides over \$60 million to help children and women who are victims of violence. This funding supports 98 emergency shelters, crisis telephone counselling, emergency transportation, outreach to women living in the community and longer-term counselling. Furthermore, this government, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, continues to fund second-stage shelters for women.

This government recognizes the importance of community-based support services for children and adults with developmental handicaps. My ministry is investing about \$380 million in those services this year.

It is not easy to raise a disabled child. That's why our government strongly supports the special services at home program and the handicapped children's benefits program. Both help families to care for disabled children at home.

Special services at home extends a helping hand to over 10,000 families with disabled children. This program provides families with funding to purchase the services and support their children need while being cared for at

home. The average family receives about \$2,700 annually from this program. Our government is committed to protecting services for disabled children by continuing to spend \$37 million a year on these special services.

It is clear from the spending commitments I've just outlined that the essential core services for children and their parents are being protected. At the same time, we're taking steps to bring our spending under control. Our children's future is at stake. Borrowing money to spend on Band-Aid solutions only delays the inevitable. Sooner or later we have to face the facts and begin to work towards solving the problems.

If simply throwing money at the problem were the solution, child poverty, poor nutrition and children in need would have vanished long ago. Facing the facts was something—

Interjections.

Mrs Marland: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am sitting beside the minister and I cannot hear what he's saying. My point of order is that interjections are out of order, and I ask you to bring this House under control.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): You're not in your seat, Margaret.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member from Mississauga will sit in her own seat.

Mrs Marland: All right. I will do that right now.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Facing the facts was something previous governments refused to do, and we're paying the price for that now. Had they kept their spending in check, had they been a little less free-wheeling in their ways, in their borrowing habits, we wouldn't be faced with making the difficult choices we are today. We wouldn't be paying billions of dollars in interest charges. Instead, we would be spending more money for the benefit of children.

It's very clear to me in a letter dated December 5, 1994, by my predecessor, the Honourable Tony Silipo, who was then the Minister of Community and Social Services—this letter was sent to MCSS-funded agencies—that he too recognized the need to reduce spending, that even while his government was trying to tell people that it was not cutting, he was telling agencies, including the children's aid societies, that their budgets would be reduced by 1% to assist with ongoing pressures.

Interjections.

Mrs Marland: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm almost a city block away from the minister speaking on this important subject, and I ask you to bring the House to order and prohibit the interjections, particularly from the third party, from veteran members who know far better than to behave as they are behaving this afternoon.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Mr Speaker, I just want to note—I follow the lead of the member from Mississauga—that their having been in opposition for five years was no example to this side of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: To the member from Mississauga, the Chair will maintain the order that it feels

appropriate, but thanks very much for your attention. The minister may continue.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Even while this government was trying to tell people there would be no spending cuts, Mr Silipo was indicating to agencies, including the children's aid societies, that there would be a reduction of 1% to assist with ongoing pressures. With a deficit of approximately \$10 billion, "ongoing pressures" would seem to be the understatement of the decade.

There's a need to reduce costs. We can't continue to create the illusion of wealth by borrowing money. We must live within our means. The people of Ontario have recognized this and rejected the habit of putting off paying for programs and foisting this huge debt upon our children and grandchildren. It's with taxpayer support that we are using some common sense to tackle overspending and other problems facing parents and their children today. For example, the previous government spent \$55 million on a child care conversion program that didn't create one new child care spot. That was a waste of money, and we stopped this after being in power one month.

We also plan to help children by giving parents more choices in child care. Parents will decide what kind of child care is best for their children, not governments. This means we'll have a system that gives real choice to people, a choice between commercial, non-profit or informal child care. This is the way it should be and this is what parents, both rural and urban, believe and want throughout Ontario.

1640

We're levelling the playing field. We're inviting the private sector back into the child care business. It means more choices for parents. Maintaining child care options for working parents is vital, but by far the largest number of children today are being looked after not by the formal day centre service, but by families, friends and neighbours.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Nickel Belt is out of order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It's important to remember that over 75% of people in Ontario rely on informal child care arrangements.

Better child care is only one aspect of our commitment to children. With leadership from the Premier and with private sector and volunteer support, we'll launch a nutrition program for needy children. We cannot allow children to go to school hungry. We'll take the best of what exists today and build a new program that works and can be implemented at little or no cost to the tax-payer. We need to do more looking at what has worked well in the past and build on it.

The government is also committed to introducing homework assistance centres. Volunteers will serve as tutors and role models to students. Expanding on the Hack House program, a successful project in North Bay, these community-based centres will help motivate students to improve their school work, increase their appreciation for learning and enhance their opportunities.

Inexpensive ways to help parents and their children do exist. One which I'm pleased to say that both the honourable member for Hamilton Centre and I agree on is the First Step project. As members may recall, Project First Step is operated by the Catholic Family Services of Hamilton-Wentworth. This program provides advice on work and school opportunities. This program is designed to assist young, single mothers to enter or re-enter the workforce. When people get jobs through this program, it helps children and their parents.

This was raised by the honourable member several days ago, and I was delighted to point out that we agree that this type of program is exactly what we need in Ontario today.

Sadly, social assistance caseloads have more than doubled since 1989, and too many of those who have come on to the system are parents. They have become trapped in a cycle of welfare dependency. We are trying to break that cycle of dependency by giving people the incentive and opportunities to earn back the difference between the old social assistance base rate and the new base rate.

But we must do more than help people break their dependence on welfare. It's important for children to have parental role models where they are actively participating in the workforce or their communities. Our plans for mandatory workfare and learnfare programs will help achieve that goal.

Furthermore, we plan to introduce other programs to assist parents. We will develop a learning and earning and parenting program. This initiative will help single parents on welfare stay in school so they can complete their education.

Finally, there was a time when helping your neighbour was the norm, when people looked to the community, to the churches and to their families for help before looking to their government for help. Instead, we seem to have lost that resourcefulness. We must turn around this feeling that the government has to do it all and think of those in need as our collective responsibility. It's society's responsibility, not the government's.

The failure of governments to act over the past decade has placed our children's future in jeopardy. Upholding the status quo and failing to reform the welfare system has forced us to make some very difficult decisions. But it would be even more difficult to explain to our grand-children why we failed to act, particularly when we had the opportunity. Our government will not miss the chance to protect our children's future.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): There are few subjects that are impacted by government in significant ways that are completely apolitical, and today's subject is one of them. We're talking about children. If we want to judge how successful a country is, we need to look at that country's children.

I'd like to ask our government to take a look at the children of Ontario, all of them. Today, I've got to echo the call from our colleagues on the NDP caucus to this Conservative government to stop hurting Ontario's children.

I find it interesting to follow the Minister of Community and Social Services today. You can't help but become emotional when you listen and wonder just what decade he thinks he's in, or has he just stepped out a Norman Rockwell painting? Ontario is not what it was in the 1950s. He's just not living in reality, nor is he directing policy out of that ministry to deal with the realities that families are facing today.

Important items to recognize: One in five children require some type of specific service; 18% of all youngsters have psychiatric problems. The government's response has been to cut, and cut without thinking of the costs. Never has there been such a need for a voice in government for children. The Ontario Liberal Party was the only party to recognize the need for such a voice and was prepared to appoint a minister of children's services.

One would not have to look far to determine real change is required in government's approach to how we care for our children. Currently, three separate ministries do various things, sometimes the same things, for children. Agencies are forced to administer the access of funding from separate ministries, each with their own set of guidelines. Moreover, ministries don't talk to each other. Instead of breaking down these barriers to better management of scarce resources, this government has elected to simply cut funding. Since this government has described its cuts as cuts in non-priority areas only, we can only surmise that children are simply not a priority with this gang.

The Liberal Party is on record as advocating a better way to do this business, not doing less business. Today, all over Ontario, all agencies and organizations that deal with children are reeling. Over the last few years, and especially since the recession of the early 1990s, demands on children's service agencies have been outstripping their ability to cope and to serve children in need.

We need not go far to prove that children are highly impacted by what goes on in their families. The more families we have in crisis, and in many instances poverty, the greater the need for intervention, the greater the need for prevention.

By this government's own admission, Ontario is in crisis: too much debt, too much unemployment, too much welfare, not enough education, a need for a better-skilled workforce. All of these things are true, and decisive action by government is long overdue. The people of Ontario were looking for a leader who would act responsibly, who would cut with a surgeon's precision, one who would be farsighted in determining the effects of the cuts and if indeed those cuts would cost us more in the long run.

What we got instead was an axe-wielding leader with no regard for our most precious commodity: our children. In fact, sweeping cuts across the board have scooped up the most needy of children, scooped them up and out. Too bad they're not like cats, where we know they'll land on their feet.

Since June: immediate cuts to ministries serving children in the middle of their fiscal year and the need to find an additional 5% to cut next year. All children's aid societies, for example, are meeting to determine what

services they can't provide. Some 41% of all people receiving welfare are children, 500,000 of them; a city like Mississauga, for example, all children, and their families' benefits have been slashed.

Almost 50% of all people currently using food banks are children. The Toronto food banks couldn't keep up with the demand over Thanksgiving weekend, despite our Premier dropping off his donated can.

All studies have indicated that children derive a huge benefit from some form of early childhood education—improved cognitive and scholastic performance, decreased use of welfare assistance, decreased delinquency, lower arrest rates, even higher enrolments in post-secondary education—yet this government cut child care subsidies to families who required the most. I have got to say I resent sitting and listening to the minister tell me now everything they are doing for children. It's like telling half a story to the people of Ontario, not telling us what they are not doing for children.

Such shortsightedness, when we know that for every dollar spent on quality preschool education, the government saves \$7 in costs to special education. Public assistance, costs associated with crime, all drop. According to Social Services Minister Tsubouchi, there is a large, untapped source of child care: stay-at-home moms "like we used 20 or 30 years ago when your mother had to get out." In this minister's mind, these women can and will provide care that's cheaper and perhaps better than licensed centres that are being devastated by the subsidy cuts. Perhaps the minister should pick up the Globe and Mail, I'm sure a paper no minister can do without, and read the horror stories that parents tell about the kind of people providing unregulated care.

I'm sure there are a lot of people, lots of moms, who do provide loving, unregulated care. I don't want to have to be the one who explains to a parent that an accident's happened because their babysitter didn't really have the time or energy to keep a mindful eye on their children. These are the obvious cuts that affect children.

1650

What about the others? Cuts to education, with a mandate that those cuts be to administration. By the minister's own admission, we have yet to define the definition of "administration" versus "classroom." Meanwhile, we still have children in portables instead of classrooms, without adequate washroom facilities for the number of students attending, and capital funding has been squashed. My own riding is an example of that.

We hailed the report For the Love of Learning by the commission on education. Where did those findings go? They reflected what parents truly were concerned about. This government has been strangely silent, considering that they too were in favour while in opposition.

The government eliminated funding for programs for male batterers and prevention and outreach services in violence-against-women programs. Did the government recognize the impact this would have on children? Most women who suffer abuse have children.

Let me tell you about a gentleman from Windsor who was a batterer. He himself was abused as a child and

became an abuser himself. He had several children. Before he got help through the program which this government has now cut, his children became abusers. He's trying to get his daughter into a program so she'll stop abusing her child. His son is in an abusive relationship now. His other children are receiving help for anger management. They learned this behaviour from him. This fellow asked me what other batterers are going to do now. This man now counsels other batterers and there's a waiting list. He asked me, "How are we going to break this cycle of violence?" We may pity the women, but is anyone thinking about the children?

This government didn't differentiate between ministries when calling for cuts. Community and Social Services funds the bulk of our children's mental health agency budgets. Has a member from government ever visited one of our children's mental health agencies? The focus has changed over the years to family intervention, recognizing the important role that family plays in reversing the negative behaviours of the child. These people who work in this field have been under the gun for years, scrambling to provide more and more with less and less.

While the government wants to refer to everything in business terms, the "end users," the product we're talking about is children. Some 85,000 of Ontario's children right now are in some form of mental health service, with 8,000 more on waiting lists. They can get the help if their community happens to provide the service. There's no mandate to provide mental health services. This must change.

May I put this in perspective for you? Children's mental health agencies in Ontario have 85,000 children in treatment right now, at an average cost of \$3,000 per child. In the worst-case scenario, the child going untreated may become dysfunctional for the balance of his or her life. How many people currently in our prisons didn't get the help they needed as children? The average cost of prison is \$45,000 a year.

We're currently spending \$220 million for 95 children's mental health agencies. The annual budget for the Toronto General Hospital—one hospital—is \$500 million.

This government promised to protect the most vulnerable people in society and promised not to impose cuts that would threaten their wellbeing. I used to be involved with developing new and innovative ways to fund-raise for the Easter Seal Society. It was there that I saw how government cuts by our last government affected children; specifically cuts to the assistive devices program, for example. They've already forced families with disabled children to find new sources of funds to help them cope with their needs. While a group like the Easter Seal Society does everything that it can, how much can it do? Surely you can't expect them to do it all. They need to know that government is going to be there to fund programs for children with disabilities.

The most enlightening research ever done on the subject of the need for children's services was the result that indicated that need was directly linked to the state of the economy; specifically unemployment rates, welfare numbers, the consumer price index as an inflation

indicator and so an indicator to financial pressures on families.

"This government will help children by creating jobs, moving the economy." There's been so little attention to jobs and the economy so far. If only as much energy was spent in this area, you'd indirectly be helping every child in Ontario.

Patrick Holland, the director of the Essex county Catholic children's aid, put it best when he said: "Children—they are keepers of our future."

I'm not about to wait four years in opposition to see that you finally do something good for the children of Ontario. I'm calling on the government to change legislation so that children's mental health services are mandated in Ontario. I'm calling on the government to assign children's services as a priority to a minister. Improve the funding mechanisms that are inadequate. I'm calling on this government to restore funding that allows our children agencies to properly serve our children. I'm begging the government to stop trying to balance the books on the backs of the children.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I join this debate because it's something that's very close to my heart. I think it should be and probably is close to the hearts of all members of this House, of no matter what political stripe.

The greatest obligation we can have as members must be the protection of those who are young. I have listened very carefully to the debate and I have attempted to understand the positions taken by members on all sides of the House.

I noted in the Conservative campaign manifesto that is touted around this province that the now government recognizes: "Our obligation to those in need is even greater in the case of our children. Children living in poverty suffer from significantly higher infant mortality rates, lower life expectancies and tend to receive poor nutrition and education."

That's quite true, so I look at the government's record in regard to those statements in its manifesto. I listened to the Minister of Community and Social Services, who justified the government's cuts that are affecting children and are hurting kids in this province by saying we must recognize that we must cut back on expenditures today in order to protect the children of tomorrow.

If you listen to that argument, even if you accept it, what the minister is really saying is that we must hurt the children of today in order to protect the children of tomorrow. Just think about that. It doesn't make sense either, because if you do indeed hurt the children of today, if they do not get the kind of education and training they need, if they are abused, if they suffer from poverty, as is recognized by the Conservatives themselves in their own manifesto, we will all pay in the future—all of us, our whole society.

It is impossible for us to meet the needs of children by hurting the children of today. It is impossible for us to protect the future of our children by saying we must deny those of today. It is just impossible.

The fact is, the future of our children is the future of

our society. What we sow today we will indeed reap tomorrow. We will reap it in greater costs, if you must evaluate it in terms of dollars and cents: greater costs in terms of incarceration, hospitalization, lack of productivity, abuse, crime and harm in the future.

So even if you follow the Conservatives' logic, you understand that there is an innate dichotomy, a contradiction. You cannot and must not argue that you are protecting the children of the future by harming the poor, the children of today.

To deny early childhood education which would ensure that children would benefit throughout their educational career and become, more likely, productive people who can provide for themselves and their families in the future, you are harming the children of tomorrow, the whole society of tomorrow.

1700

I ask the government, I beg the government, to realize that this is not just a bit of political rhetoric, what we have put before the House today, that we are indeed sincere. You must understand that you cannot proceed on the basis of short-term desires to transfer wealth from the poor to the wealthy today, even if you accept the trickle-down theory that if the wealthy have more money they will invest it and that will somehow produce more employment. You cannot transfer from the poor of today to the wealthy in our society without harming those children today, or even the wealthy will be more endangered in the future: They will be vulnerable to crime in the future, and we all suffer.

I've spent a lot of time in this House and I have argued on many occasions for good child care and for improved assistance to those who are in need because of the need to ensure that children will benefit. I think all members of the House understand that, but I'm receiving far too many letters from single mothers who are in school doing what this government wants them to do—to obtain education so they can become productive and care for their children and to work, get off of the welfare cycle—who are now telling me that because of the cuts to welfare they are going to have to quit school and remain on welfare at the lower rates because they can't afford child care.

I repeat, we cannot harm the children of today in order to benefit the children of tomorrow. It just doesn't work. I urge the government to rethink its position and to take what we have put before it today as seriously as we've intended it to be taken.

Mrs Janet Ecker (Durham West): As the minister has stated before, our government's commitment to the children is clear. That commitment was spelled out in the Common Sense Revolution and was supported by the Ontario voters in June.

We said we would implement a community nutrition program for school-age children, and we will. We said we would encourage the development of more day care spaces with more choice for parents, and we will. We said we would end the nationalization of our child care system, and we will. But most importantly, we said we would restore economic prosperity to this province by

getting our financial house in order, and we will. That is the best guarantee for the future of our children.

The people of Ontario want this government to protect children in genuine need and they want us to create affordable programs for children who are at risk through community-based initiatives that protect their health and wellbeing. But the best way to begin doing that, the best investment we can make in our kids, is to make sure that their parents have jobs; it's to make sure that every hard-earned dollar that their parents make doesn't get taken away in taxes. That's what our government's agenda is all about: jobs and economic prosperity. That's why we must get our financial house in order.

Previous governments have been using the Visa card to pay the mortgage, and we've hit our limit. The result is a debt that costs us \$9 billion in interest just in this year alone. That is more than we spend on our hospitals. That is more than we spend on social assistance. That means each and every one of us, including each child, is paying \$800 a year to finance that debt. That is the legacy of my honourable colleagues across the floor, and that's just this year alone. In five years it will be \$1,700. I believe that previous governments have mortgaged our children's future, the future of every child in this province. That is the real threat to our children.

The NDP's response was to blindly throw taxpayers' money at an unsustainable system. They committed millions we never had in order to convert private day care spaces into non-profit spaces. All told, over \$50 million was wasted without creating one new child care space. The previous government, at a time when it claimed to be cutting back, was actually wasting millions on conversion. After actively trying to drive the private sector out of the field, they then spent our tax dollars to try to buy out the survivors.

With quality and parental choice in mind, we've invited the private sector back into the field, to put an end to discrimination against non-government enterprises. We will not succumb to the premise the third party has tried to establish, one that says that if it's not state-run, it's harmful to children. Ontario cannot afford that narrow view. We don't have the money to keep funding programs that are less effective and affordable than the people of Ontario demand.

That is why we are reviewing the overall child care program that we have, to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being spent in the most effective way. The issues we are looking at include parental choice; the quality of services; whether it's possible to streamline or simplify the programs if possible; and we are also looking at the affordability, because we cannot have a system that taxpayers cannot afford.

We will continue our role in licensing centre-based and home-based child care under the Day Nurseries Act, and we will make sure that standards for quality, for safety and child nutrition are met for all operators and by all operators.

As we make our funding and policy decisions in this area, we will work with municipalities and other key players needed to help us develop an appropriate strategy in these difficult economic and financial times.

In its motion, the third party has the audacity to state that we are hurting children by changing the Jobs Ontario Training funding formula—or should I call it the Bob's Ontario training funding formula—which subsidizes 14,000 day care spaces. If there is pain which is inflicted, it has been inflicted on the taxpayer who has to bear the cost, those hardworking parents who are trying to put a roof over their heads and food on the table without a dime in government assistance.

By reverting to the 80-20 cost-sharing formula with municipalities, our government has done the only financially responsible thing. We believe that elected municipal officials, our colleagues, will do what is best for their communities and support social assistance recipients in meeting their child care needs while they work or train. Municipalities will be able to use the savings from social assistance rate reductions to fund their 20% share for the day care spaces.

When we talk about formal child care, let us be sure we know what we are talking about. Studies have estimated that between 75% to 90% of children are cared for in the informal child care sector. According to Statistics Canada, there are just over a million kids in Ontario under 13 whose parent or parents work. This means that only 10% of our children have parents who use the formal child care sector.

The third party would like us to believe that formal day care is appropriate for all kids at all times. They want us to believe that without universal day care, all of our children will be at risk. Yes, we do need good-quality day care for our kids, but we also need good parents, parents who can provide for their children because they have jobs, parents who can make choices for their families because all of their income is not being taxed away by a government that has been carried away with its debt.

Let us not forget that we, in this fiscal year, are already spending almost \$550 million on the 10% of children whose parents use the formal system, and 71% of that child care operating budget, almost \$390 million in subsidies, goes for low-income parents. The remaining parents who use the informal system have been helped by family members, neighbours and friends, and that too can be an appropriate system.

1710

The ministry is the first to recognize that too many children throughout Ontario will be the innocent victims of past government overspending, their future mortgaged by our spendthrift colleagues across the way. We have to fix this. We are prepared to do so, to make the difficult decisions today so that our children will have a financial future.

Having explained our government's commitment to children and belief in their future, I will close with a message about the fundamental difference between our way and the previous status quo, and there is a fundamental difference. The big difference is in this government's approach to the wellbeing of Ontario's children is that we are not willing to bankrupt this province with irresponsible spending sprees. That alone shows the support that we have for the younger generation. We

want them to grow up in a province that is stable and financially responsible. We want them to grow up with a bright future and a job, and we are prepared to do that.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I rise in support of the motion, by the third party, in front of us today. This issue is not one of partisan politics. This issue is one of betrayal, a betrayal of children across this province, a betrayal by a government that has decided to launch the most massive attack on children in the history of this province.

This government feels it is acceptable, morally and politically acceptable, to fund a tax cut on the backs of children. This government promised protection for disabled children, and what we've seen in this House has been a comedy of errors, disabled children being left vulnerable, being left on their own and often being left and forced to end up back in institutions as a result of the cuts.

When this government said that it was not going to affect disabled people and their families, it somehow failed to make a connection between a family of a disabled child and a parent who is looking after a disabled child. If you cut the benefits of that parent, you are cutting the benefits to that child. This government doesn't understand that. They get around it by saying, "We didn't cut the support we're giving the child." What you are doing is cutting the support you're giving the parents and the families to look after this child. That is brutal politics.

This government is doing that because they think they can get away with it, because they think that the cuts to welfare, they think the cuts to the disabled, they think the cuts to the children are politically favourable today. Maybe the polls are showing that, and maybe that is why they're continuing this massive attack.

What I want to remind this government is that what is politically right may not be morally right, but I can tell you that what is morally right would ultimately be politically right and what you are doing is wrong on a moral level, it is wrong on a political level, the legacy you are going to leave, the trap that you're going to put children into.

This government talks about breaking the welfare cycle. How do you break the welfare cycle by punishing 41% of the dependants? Forty-one per cent of the people who rely on welfare in this province are children. How do you break that cycle by continuing to punish them? How do you break it by giving their parents 22% less to feed them, for shelter, for coats, for shoes? How do you break that cycle?

What you do is you ensure that these children continue to become welfare dependent for the next generation and the next generation after that. You are taking away their hope. You are taking away any real possibility that these children can have to break this welfare cycle and this welfare trap.

The government doesn't understand the need that is out there. This government doesn't understand that children are hurting as a result of its cuts, and you can stand there and pound your chest and talk about the lazy welfare bum that you like to stereotype. As said the other day, how fair is it for you to cut by 22% the benefit that the laid-off construction worker or steelworker in my riding gets and those benefits that that individual uses to feed his children? That is what this government believes is the right thing to do, because their rich friends who make \$90,000, \$100,000, \$200,000 a year can't wait for payday, can't wait for the cuts that you're making to their taxes, can't wait for the 30% tax cut you promised them on the backs of disabled children, on the backs of kids who can least afford it.

When was the last time this government made a move that affected the children of people who are making \$100,000 or \$150,000? When was the last government legislation that your members brought across that affected the children of wealthy people? There hasn't been any.

We have a government that doesn't understand what it's like to live in poverty. We have a government that doesn't understand what it is like to be trapped. We have a government that is driven by polls, any lack of compassion, any lack of understanding. And we have a government that doesn't know what it is like for a child to be hurting, for a child to go to school hungry in the morning, for a child not to have a pair of shoes or a winter coat. I know that may not be the reality of your world, but I can tell you, it is the reality of the world of a lot of people in this province, and you are going to continue to inflict this pain and punishment as a result of these cuts.

I would ask the minister and the members of this government to spend some time going out. Go into the schools where these children attend. Go into some innercity schools, instead of the wealthy suburbs, once in a while. Go into the inner-cities; go into downtown Toronto; go into some of the schools in downtown Hamilton, downtown London, downtown Ottawa. Talk to the children in those schools, talk to the parents in those schools, and see if you come away with that same sense of chest-pounding and that same sense of bravado that you're showing in this House as a result of the impact that you're making.

Unless this government changes its tactics and its approach to the punishment it is inflicting on people, it is going to ensure that we have hundreds of thousands of kids without any help, any opportunity, without any future. At the end of this mandate, that will be your legacy. It won't be a legacy of a 30% cut to the rich, to the people making \$100,000, \$200,000, \$300,000, to your supporters. It will be a legacy of dooming a generation of children to another generation of poverty, to a generation of hell and to a life and an existence that is already miserable and that you're going to make more miserable.

I would hope that this government comes to its senses, shows some of the compassion and understanding that is out there. Once in a while, look at yourself in the mirror and ask yourself, "How fair are we being with these cuts, and how badly are we punishing children?" Whenever you think of making another cut in welfare to the disabled, to people who need help, look at yourself in the mirror and ask, what have those children done to deserve the punishment that you're inflicting upon them?

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Cooke?

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): It's our

motion, so I should probably wrap up the last five minutes. If they want to finish up, it's okay.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Brantford.

Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford): I can't promise to be nearly as melodramatic as my colleague from Hamilton East, but I'll certainly get to the point.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in the House today as the first Conservative MPP from Brantford since 1987. Some of my colleagues may in fact remember Phil Gillies, the last PC member who sat in this Legislature, from 1981 until 1987.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my immediate predecessor, Mr Brad Ward, a distinguished member of our society, an NDP member. Although we disagreed philosophically on a number of issues, he served with dignity and he ran a clean, honourable campaign. I can tell you that Brantford was well represented by Mr Ward.

If I may, I'd like to take a moment just to tell you a little bit about my community before we address the motion of the leader of the third party. Brantford is a city with a population of 82,000. It is 118 years old and named for the crossing in the Grand River discovered by native chief Joseph Brant, hence Brant's ford.

It is the city where Alexander Graham Bell first conceived of and later perfected the telephone, and it was the point of origin for the first long-distance telephone call, all the way to Paris, Ontario.

There are people in Brantford who are very proud to say it is also the home of hockey great Wayne Gretzky.

Brantford's most recent accomplishment was winning the national Communities in Bloom contest only a few weeks ago, and it was an honour for me to mention that in this House then.

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Brantford was once a thriving industrial centre until the recession of the last 10 years gouged our industry to the very core. I can tell you that with the disappearance of our industrial base went much of our retail sector as well, resulting in a downtown core that today stands at about 80% empty.

Brantford is the only city of its size in Ontario without its own college or university as well, and it is the only city of its size not connected to the Ontario 400 series highways, which we hope to rectify in the near future with the completion of Highway 403.

I can tell you that Brantford has taken its share of knocks in the past, economically, somewhat more than a number of the other municipalities in this province. In light of this, I think I'm in a unique position today to be able to comment with some authority on the resolution by the leader of the third party.

I must say that as a new member of the Legislature I've been struck by the number of times the leader of the third party to date has condemned the CSR as being ideological. But this subtle form of attack by the former Premier of what was Ontario's first—and many Ontarians certainly hope it's the last—socialist government betrays

his own left-wing agenda, which holds that there is no such thing as political fence-sitting. Therefore, in the context of his own perspective, this ideological accusation is meaningless.

What a majority of Ontarians also find meaningless is the kind of socialist rhetoric and policies they've endured for five years coming from the former NDP government. Bob Rae's legacy in this province is a large part of the reason why on June 8 the Harris Tories were given a solid mandate to effect needed changes in the direction Ontario was going.

We didn't hide what we were going to do during the election campaign. In fact, we explained in great detail months before the election was ever being talked about and we explained in the Common Sense Revolution what we were going to do. We outlined the direction we were going to take to restore prosperity to Ontario, to reduce the deficit, to cut government spending, to make Ontario open for business and jobs so that families, and especially our children, could learn to hope and have confidence in the future.

Bob Rae can't pretend, as he often likes to do, that the government of Premier Mike Harris suddenly got up one day and decided to bring in spending cuts and attack the deficit that the NDP helped balloon so much when it was in power. More importantly, Bob Rae can't pretend that the people of Ontario aren't behind the Common Sense policies, that somehow he is now the self-appointed indignant voice of the people.

On June 8, we heard the voice of the people. We listened to what they told us then. We listened during the months before the election, when we travelled the province to hear the views of the average hardworking Ontarians who told us their sense of betrayal as taxpayers, that government had become too large, too bureaucratic and too expensive and that it was time we returned to traditional values of hard work and economic independence.

We heard this perhaps most loudly from those on social assistance as well. For Bob Rae, being on welfare is not only apparently a great thing, but also a measure of social progress. Well, the leader of the third party should listen to those on welfare who say they want to be economically independent. They want a job so they can have their dignity and self-worth restored. Our government believes that we have social progress when people have a hand up rather than a handout. The social safety net should never become a hammock for the people on social assistance.

A strong, vibrant economy that attracts business investment and generates private sector jobs is the foundation for a secure future for ourselves and our children, who do not deserve to be left with the legacy of Bob Rae: a legacy of debt, of bloated government bureaucracy and a huge deficit.

I'd like to talk for a minute about the cuts to welfare and specifically address the concerns of the leader of the third party. In his resolution, he states:

"Whereas Mike Harris's government is hurting kids who live on welfare through cuts in welfare benefits,

because 41% of the people living on welfare are children; and

"Whereas the 22% cut in welfare benefits hurts children most of all—children who have to do without food, clothing or adequate housing they need, children who have no way to fight back against the cuts," and he goes on.

What hope do the children of this province have if they are to be condemned to spending their childhood growing up dependent on a welfare cheque? They are not taught the value of hard work or being able to get ahead as a result of that hard work or being able to purchase the things they like as a result of that hard work.

The third party can sit over there and they can talk about being the guardians to social programs, but it's their own inability to control their spending while in government, to control the province's finances while in government, that is leading to the very destruction of those social programs they claim to defend, and that's the reality of this House.

I'd like to cite the dramatic drop in welfare rates in the last couple of months: some 24,000 fewer people on welfare in September than there were in August. This isn't because the economy has suddenly turned around. This isn't because all of a sudden there are a whole lot more jobs and economic growth out there in a couple of months. Mind you, I would suggest that there will be in due course with our plan. But at this point I would suggest to you the reason we have a reduced number of people on social services in Ontario is because lower social assistance rates means less of an incentive not to work in lower-paying jobs. That's the reality of the initiatives we've taken so far to create jobs.

For too long people have had the luxury of turning their noses up at minimum wage because in some cases it has been more profitable to be on welfare and doing nothing for their cheques, and frankly, who can blame them? It doesn't make a lot of sense to go to work when you can make more money or as much money sitting at home doing nothing. What we've done with our cuts of 21.6% is level the playing field between lower-paying jobs and social assistance benefits.

There is no greater disservice to minimum wage earners than to tax them and then turn around and use those very taxes to subsidize people on social assistance to a higher degree or a higher level than they earn in their very own jobs. That's the legacy the NDP and the Liberal governments have left this province.

I want to make one more point as well: that there are more children on welfare today as a result of the NDP and Liberal policies than in the history of this province, and that's a number that they know is true and it's a number they cannot refute.

Our critics are fond of quoting the Common Sense Revolution, accusing us of turning our backs on those who need help the most and breaking the campaign promises—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Would the member for Brantford take his seat for a minute. The member for

Essex South is out of order. I will ask for your attention that is becoming to members of this House.

Mr Ron Johnson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I've got to tell you, you took the sting out of my conclusion.

As I was saying, our critics are fond of quoting the CSR and accusing of us of turning our backs on those who need help the most and breaking campaign promises, when in fact the Common Sense Revolution promised that a Mike Harris government will take \$500 million of savings from welfare reform and reinvest it in the system, with the lion's share going towards a series of first-step programs designed to help young single mothers on social assistance and their children take the first steps towards independence; in essence, to give children on welfare the best opportunity they've had in a long while to lead productive lives.

That's a real plan of action that will ease the plight of children on welfare and it's certainly not the vague and nebulous campaign promises of mandatory opportunities made by some of our critics.

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): During the election the Conservatives were fond of stating that "the goal of Mike Harris's reforms and changes to Ontario's welfare programs is to target support to those most genuinely in need of help"—that's a quote from their revolution—and moreover "to open more options for parents to choose the kind of care they want for their children."

It is clear that the government has already broken those promises. Instead of showing leadership by creating a strategy for improving the welfare of our children and underprivileged citizens, the government has launched a systematic campaign of program and benefit obliteration.

Already this year we have seen massive cuts that attack the basic needs of children and the less fortunate. The list is heartless and includes a 21.6% reduction in social assistance rates, slashed funding for day cares, reduced funding for Jobs Ontario Training child care; cuts to Youth in Care network; elimination of the child welfare foster care demo project, children's services coordinating advisory groups, the child care program development fund and community youth support; the reduction of maternity homes, and the list goes on.

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We all know that it is easy to go through itemized lists and cross out programs forever. But it takes real guts, compassion, commitment and imagination to develop rational, realistic policies and alternatives. It is clear that this government has chosen the easy route. It is also easy to speak of funding cuts when they are dehumanized. However, I want to press upon the government that it is dealing with real people, and in this case real children.

I have in my hand just a few of the many letters I have received from parents in my Downsview riding that express true concern for the welfare of their children who rely on day care and outrage at the government's decision to turn its back on the children of this province.

All of these parents now face losing their child care spaces. Their options are few. They may be forced to unregulated facilities, which will put their children at risk.

They cannot always afford the higher fees, which leave little money for necessities. Food banks in my riding are already unable to serve the existing needs. One can only imagine what will happen in the future. The only other choice is for parents to quit their jobs or, if they're in school, to leave school in order to look after their children.

Is this the type of results that the government truly believes will bring about a stronger, healthier economy and a more productive society? Is this fairness? Can anyone truly believe that?

I urge the government to reconsider and to listen to the people. I urge it to focus not just on the bottom line but on the consequences of the draconian, ill-thought-out measures it is considering. The people in my riding have urged me not to abandon children and child care. I assure them that I will not, and I urge the government to do likewise. Do not abandon the children of this province. Their future and ours is at stake. Above all, do not abandon the children in the name of giving a tax break to the rich. No one, not even the rich, will thank you or forgive you for the irreparable damage that you will do.

Mr Peter Preston (Brant-Haldimand): I'd like to start this off in a novel way by congratulating you and your associates, Mr Speaker, and through you I'd like to congratulate all those elected on June 8 from the whole House.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the citizens of Brant-Haldimand, one of the largest ridings in southern Ontario. I will endeavour to do them proud. It is a privilege to represent such a diverse riding; it stretches from Lake Erie in the south into the Cambridge city limits in the north, from Wainfleet in the east to Burford in the west.

Brant-Haldimand is a predominantly rural riding, encompassing seven municipalities, a native reservation, three regional governments and represented by two federal MPs. The farms of Haldimand, Dunnville and Brant county provide the crops that feed our province. We know what hard work is, and we're not afraid of it. We expect to reap the benefits of what we sow.

Brant-Haldimand is a riding which from 1919 to 1995, 76 years straight, was a Liberal riding. The people of Brant-Haldimand decided it was time for a change, and here I am. Why? The answer is quite simple: For the last 10 years we have watched while the government of Ontario continued to penalize the hardworking with higher and higher taxes until Ontario was one of the highest-taxed jurisdictions in North America. They also discouraged the unemployed from finding work by inflating welfare benefits until they were not only the most generous in the country, but also a full 30% above the national average.

The people living on welfare have come to define those benefits as their income. All we are asking—and as a society of taxpayers I know we have the right to ask—is that those receiving these benefits do something—anything—in return for their handout. And let us be clear: Welfare has become a handout, not the hand up it was designed to be. It is thought of as an entitlement, a paycheque even, to those receiving it. Rather than an emergency source of funds, it has become a way of life.

The opposition would have Ontario believe that we are mean-spirited, cruel and heartless, even though our welfare rates are still among the most generous in the country and 10% above the average of the other nine provinces.

Ontario has been referred to as the engine of Confederation. Ten years ago, the present opposition left the station with that engine. Admittedly, they had some baggage to carry from the former government, but rather than showing restraint and trying to fix the things, they ran helter-skelter through the night, picking up more and more fiscal freight.

When Ontarians had had enough, they changed engineers and the leader of the third party took over. For the day the freight he inherited was enormous, but the same scenario again: Instead of repairs, he pushes the stick to the throttle full out and adds freight with abandon. He continued this irresponsible flight through the province, throwing unearned money—deficit money—at all the problems.

Well, the inevitable has happened.

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me. The time for the government speeches is complete.

Mr Preston: Thank you. I will give the second part of it next week.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I wish we had more time on the clock to speak to this particular issue. I am in support of the resolution today, but because of time allocation I would like to address one aspect that is of concern to me.

I would like to begin by identifying that 39% of children whose mothers are abused witness the violence and are in need of counselling and a safe haven, which is an astounding figure.

I'd like to share with the members of the House, because I know most members do care about what happens to children—we have to remember that no one is disagreeing that these are tough times and that we have to make some very tough decisions, but when we talk about the most vulnerable, when we talk about women who are abused, we talk not only about women who are abused but who are threatened with their lives. They have to leave their homes with children and try and make a new life in fear. What happens to their children?

I'd like to refer the members to a report on the health of Canada's children, a profile by the Canadian institute of health, and I'd like to identify three aspects that I think are worthy of some serious consideration.

Children who are exposed to violence may internalize their feelings and become depressed and withdrawn. Others externalize their feelings and become involved in delinquency acts and aggressive behaviour. Some children who live with violence may experience difficulties in school, resulting in poor academic performance, behavioural difficulties and frequent absences. Some adolescents who live with violence demonstrate severe psychological and emotional distress, culminating in running away, attempting suicide, or abuse of drugs and/or alcohol.

I point this out this afternoon because I know that every member in this House cares about children, yet

when we had discussions through question period and we asked this government, by way of the minister for women's issues and the Minister of Community and Social Services, about second-stage funding for helping the women who have been abused and threatened, the most, most vulnerable with their children, what was the response?

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I won't impute negative motivations, that the intent was to see that children would indeed suffer. I believe it's because the realization of those impacts and those decisions was not understood. So I will take the minister responsible for women's issues at her word when she says that the centre for second-stage housing, Harmony House, which serves all of eastern Ontario, will indeed retain its funding, because I know it's so important that these little kids who are with their parents—by the way, I might point out that these are women who have to start new lives, women who have been threatened with their very lives, and that's why they have to leave. If they stay an average of four and a half to five months and get counselling, receive some protection and find jobs, that's why they're able to leave, because they find a new life and find employment. I know the members would want to support that.

So I hope that when the ministers reflect upon the decisions and report back to the House on the impact these cuts have, they will say that the children, especially those who are most vulnerable, at a particular stage—and we're not talking about a permanent situation; we're talking about helping people in time of need, to help them deal with a crisis, to help them get back on their feet so they may begin to live fruitful lives again.

Any government with any compassion, any kind of understanding of the importance of helping our children to grow up to be full, rich and psychologically healthy, will know that that investment is absolutely minuscule; that if we take resources away from helping children who are abused or children suffering from threats of violence, we will dearly pay for it economically, socially, medically, in terms of our justice systems etc.

I would like to wind up my comments by supporting the government in its particular deal with second-stage funding. The resolution as proposed is a good one and I support that, but I know in particular that the government will do the right thing, in the final analysis, because everyone does care about our future, which means they care about our children.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My concern, in wrapping up this debate for our caucus, is that children have no place on the agenda of this government, absolutely no place at all.

The motion from the third party calls on the government to stop hurting children, and I certainly support that call, as do all members of my caucus. In fact, who would not support a call that we stop hurting children? Surely no one other than the sickest in our society would deliberately set out to hurt our children.

I don't believe that anyone in the government would deliberately hurt children. The problem is that no one in this government gives a single thought to children. Children don't vote, they certainly aren't taxpayers, and we know that voters and taxpayers are very high on this government's agenda.

Children aren't part of the business crowd or the old boys' network and they certainly can't protest at Queen's Park. Children are largely silent and they cost a lot to support, so they make an easy target and a too easily forgotten one.

Some of the cuts that this government makes are hard to hide, even though the government is trying its best to hide them. When the waiting list grows for cardiac surgery, you know you've got a crisis in health care. When you shut down halfway houses and send people who are working back to jail, the economic stupidity of the decision is readily apparent, and even if the human cost is a little harder to measure, it is immediate.

But the effects of cuts on children are less direct. The costs are longer-term and the biggest price to be paid by individuals, by their families and by society itself is somewhere down the road.

But some of that pain that children feel is immediate. If a child is hungry because the welfare support to his parents is cut, that's immediate pain. The pain of being teased at school because you're not dressed like the other kids is a very immediate pain. The embarrassment of not being able to go on school outings or buy a hot dog on hot dog day because there just isn't an extra dollar—I suggest that is very immediate pain to a young child. But the long-term cost of hunger and family tension and social isolation is indeed harder to measure, and 500,000 children have been hurt by this government's cuts to welfare.

We know that children's agencies have all had their funding cut too, because the government says that everybody has to share the pain of the government's tough decisions and why should agencies that serve children be exempt? I'll tell you why children's agencies should be exempt from these cuts: because our children's aid societies cannot meet the need with the resources they have now. They will not be able to act to protect children from abuse, let alone prevent the abuse from happening, if these cuts are made.

The pain of abuse is real and it is all too immediate. Surely we are not a society that is ready to pocket a few more tax dollars knowing that children are being abused and that we don't have the resources to stop it because children just weren't counted when the cuts were made.

It is not just today's children who will suffer the pain of abuse. As my colleagues have said, it is their children and the children after that, and that's why there has been such a strong commitment to act now to stop the abuse.

This government is not deliberately letting children be hurt; it is just blindly cutting its budgets. If they would just look, just stop and look for a moment at what these cuts are doing, surely they would stop because surely they don't want children to be hurt.

Surely they know too that we are still a long way from meeting the mental health needs of children and their families. My colleague I think has indicated a waiting list of some 8,000 families for children's mental health services.

Now, maybe this government really does think that troubled kids are bad kids. Maybe they think that if you could just get some discipline into them, maybe if you could get them into boot camp a little bit earlier, there wouldn't be so many problems.

If you believe that, then you might not think you're actually hurting kids when you cut the resources for assessment and counselling. Well, I've worked with these kids, and I'll tell you, the troubled kids will just get more troubled if they don't get help. Putting them in boot camps when they get older and they break the law—because troubled kids who don't commit suicide very often break the law—is just going to make things worse.

There is so much more that this government is doing that our children will pay the price for. There may be some nurturing grandmothers and some at-home neighbours around to provide care for the children of working parents, but there are far more informal arrangements for child care that are inadequate and are temporary and contribute nothing to a child's healthy development. What alternatives are there going to be, when this government is finished, for those less well-to-do parents who simply can't afford quality child care for their children?

What will happen, as this government struggles to find some \$5 billion more to pay for its income tax cut, to the Better Beginnings program for disadvantaged children, which we know has had such remarkable results, or to the special education services for children with special needs? I met with a woman in my constituency last week who was almost desperate because the child she has supported so fully throughout his elementary school education is not going to get a special education program in high school because the school board simply can't afford to make the special education resources available any longer and that same board is now trying to cut \$17 million more from its budget.

What happens to developmentally delayed children as funding for the community agents who provide support care for them is slashed? Again in my own riding, I know there was the closure of an institutional setting for developmentally delayed children; the community agency accepted the responsibility for providing for their care, and their budget is now being slashed.

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What will happen to the special services at home program? Will it be able to offer the kind of support and assistance and respite that parents need so they can continue to care for their severely disabled child? We know that area has been in crisis, yet this minister refers to it as the panacea as his response to the parents of disabled children.

I wonder if anybody over there will be willing to open their eyes to see what is happening. I know if they do, they will have to care. Nobody wants to deliberately hurt children, but children are being hurt, and if this government does not stop, we will all pay a huge price somewhere down the road. This is not a place where you can save now and reinvest later. If you don't invest in children today, it will be too late, and for children who are hurting, the pain is all too real today.

We wholeheartedly support the motion and the call to stop hurting our children.

Mr Cooke: Listening to the debate this afternoon, it makes me feel like it's another issue where we're going back to the 1960s. I have never heard more of these right-wing, conservative comments than I've heard since this assembly has come back together. I encourage the members that I think still do have some feeling for people, like the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, to take a look at the debate that's taken place in this House this afternoon, look at some of the comments that have been made. There's got to be some sanity brought back to this government and the social policy of this government before it's too late.

Those of us who have been in the Legislature for a number of years remember that in the 1970s one of the greatest debates on children's services took place in this Legislature over a number of years. We had a leader at that time, Stephen Lewis, who led the fight for reform in children's services across this province. If you take a look at the public inquiries that were held, the coroners' inquests, and take a look at what happened in some of the children's services in this province, we had suicides, we had kids coming out of training schools in worse shape than they went in, we had facilities that were just not doing an adequate job, we had no coordination of children's services, and there were public inquiries, there were coroners' inquests. That's why there are no training schools in this province: because they hurt kids. They ended up doing more harm than good, and we ended up having suicide after suicide. It seems that we don't learn anything from the past.

Why are we now talking about boot camps? Boot camps, as I understand them and have heard the minister talk about them, are just training schools in another way. We are just going to set up more programs and institutions in order to appeal to public opinion to get tough on so-called crime. I know in 10 or 15 years we will go through exactly the same process we went through with training schools, but in the meantime there will be victims from one end of this province to the other.

It's an absolute shame that this government won't look at history that isn't that long ago. Talk to Keith Norton; he was the minister who brought in many of the reforms. Talk to Bill Davis; he presided over many of the reforms. Don't do some of the things you are doing because of ideology. Take a look at the practical application of what you're going to do and see what we learned in the 1970s.

I fear, though, that they won't. Instead we see cut after cut after cut, and I agree with the Leader of the Opposition: You can't cut children's aid societies. If on one hand you're saying that the police in the province have to enforce the law because you believe in law and order, how can you say on the other hand that you don't believe in the enforcement of the Child and Family Services Act, an act that is there to protect vulnerable children? People who abuse kids are breaking the law. The agencies that have the responsibility to enforce that law are the children's aid societies of this province. You're cutting

them back. That's putting kids at risk. They're not able to fulfil their mandate under the act, and you're putting children at risk. There will be victims: sexual abuse, physical abuse. There'll be individual victims and the entire province will pay the price.

Why are we doing this? Why are you doing this? It's not because you want to balance the budget or that the Liberals spent too much or that we spent too much, although I always get a chuckle out of that coming from Tories, when Bill Davis presided as the Premier and didn't have one balanced budget the entire time that he was Premier. But let's be honest. What you're doing is you're engaging in the biggest single expenditure in decades in this province, a \$5-billion tax decrease. Don't tell people in this province that you have to cut back on children's services because of deficits. You're cutting back on children's services because you've made a choice, and the choice that you've made is a tax decrease that will go primarily to those who have incomes of \$75,000 and more.

The fact is that it is a cruel policy decision. It's cruel because the people who are paying the price more than anyone else are the children of this province, as I said: children's aid societies, children's mental health facilities. We have waiting lists in this province for kids who desperately need help from psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers. Those waiting lists are going to grow. You know that and I know that and you're doing it and it's going to happen because of your determination to impose the biggest expenditure in decades in this province, a \$5-billion tax decrease.

I beg the government to reconsider, because the children of this province need that investment.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Mr Rae has moved opposition day motion number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Five members standing; call in the members. There will be a five minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1757 to 1802.

The Speaker: Would the members take their seats, please.

We will now vote on Mr Rae's opposition day motion number 2. All those in favour will please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic Bartolucci, Rick Bisson, Gilles Brown, Michael A. Castrilli, Annamarie Churley, Marilyn Cleary, John C. Cooke, David S. Cordiano, Joseph Crozier, Bruce Curling, Alvin Duncan, Dwight Gerretsen, John Gravelle, Michael Hoy, Pat Kwinter, Monte Lankin, Frances Marchese, Rosario Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony McGuinty, Dalton McLeod, Lyn Miclash, Frank Morin, Gilles E. Patten, Richard Phillips, Gerry Pouliot, Gilles Pupatello, Sandra Ramsay, David Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony Wildman, Bud Wood, Len

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

Nays

Arnott, Ted Baird, John R. Barrett, Toby Bassett, Isabel Beaubien, Marcel Boushy, Dave Brown, Jim Carroll, Jack Chudleigh, Ted Clement, Tony Danford, Harry DeFaria, Carl Doyle, Ed Ecker, Janet Elliott, Brenda Fisher, Barbara Flaherty, Jim Ford, Douglas B. Fox, Gary Froese, Tom Galt, Doug Gilchrist, Steve

Grimmett, Bill

Guzzo, Garry J. Hardeman, Ernie Harnick, Charles Hastings, John Hodgson, Chris Hudak, Tim Jackson, Cameron Johns, Helen Johnson, Bert Johnson, Dave Johnson, Ron Jordan, Leo Kells, Morley Leadston, Gary L. Marland, Margaret Martiniuk, Gerry Maves, Bart Murdoch, Bill Newman, Dan O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Parker, John L. Pettit, Trevor

Preston, Peter Rollins, E.J. Douglas Ross, Lillian Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Saunderson, William Shea. Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Skarica, Toni Smith. Bruce Snobelen, John Sterling, Norman W. Tascona, Joseph N. Tilson, David Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Vankoughnet, Bill Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wilson, Jim Wood, Bob

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 33; the nays, 67.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Pursuant to standing order 34, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

The member for Lake Nipigon has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Transportation. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or his parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Would those members leave quietly, please. The member for Lake Nipigon has the floor for five minutes.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): I rise today simply because not once but twice in this House I asked the Minister of Transportation to clarify his policies vis-àvis winter highway maintenance standards and conditions.

Mr Speaker, you're very much aware, as we all are, that as surely as the river flows and the sun shines, winter shall be upon us very soon.

This is what the minister had to say when I quizzed him on this very real issue last Wednesday, October 11, and I quote from Hansard: "This government is committed to maintaining the safest highways and it is a priority of this government to do exactly just that."

While the minister was making that commitment, the knights of the long knives were slashing and gutting the very heart, the very soul, of the allocation, to the point where a good Samaritan, the good soul, committed an act of conscience: He leaked a ministry document to us, the opposition; a person with a social conscience. This brown envelope appeared and there was something in it. This is it, and I quote:

"Attached are the questions and answers which were prepared for briefing cabinet ministers on the proposed changes for winter 1995-96. As most of you already know, the changes have been agreed to by Management Board, but must still go to cabinet for final blessing. A communication strategy is being developed by" so-andso. "I trust that these Q & As will be of some assistance."

What's at stake? Another document comes in. You can look at it on page 1, you can look at it on page 14. This is a caravan of misery. This is their intent. This is what they shall do. Oh, my God. Patrols across Ontario will be cut from 24 hours per day to 16; 40% fewer patrols. Think of yourself, think of your loved ones. We all have to drive the highways in the province of Ontario.

Sand and salt spreaders—we're talking about an essential service—will be reduced by 12.3%. My God, may they never reach the riding of Lake Nipigon, because you don't wish anyone harm, but can you imagine the potential for fatalities? But their appetite—for they wish to reach what they refer to as a balanced budget with a very short-frame timetable—becomes insatiable. They're not satisfied. They go further. The number of plows on the road will fall by 10.6%. This will result in 125 fewer seasonal staff.

The province has a budget of \$57 billion. With this action directe, with this court of last resort, they will cut all of \$6.5 million, a fistful, and they will scare the living daylights out of many of us. In fact, at times when we don't have the proper maintenance and we attempt to pass a transport and we have a hazardous driving condition, we will begin to die. There will be people who will be maimed. Mayhem will result, because people did not stop and say: "There are things that you do and there are thresholds. There are things that you don't do." You don't cut your budget for a forest fire, and realistically you don't cut the budget when it comes to snowplowing. It's inevitable. It's a given. It's part of doing business in this province of Ontario.

I would ask that the minister reconsider this decision and wish him success in finding the money elsewhere.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just as a matter of courtesy to the member, surely the minister could've been present to respond. He had the opportunity to. Perhaps as a new minister, he didn't know the rules, that he should be—

The Speaker: The member's talking out of order. Order.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I'd like to inform the House that the minister is not able to be here today because he is in Ottawa on behalf of the province of Ontario appearing before the House of Commons committee on transport Bill C-101.

Bill C-101 is a significant piece of transportation legislation, and it has particular significance to our recently introduced shortline rail legislation.

I am pleased to speak on behalf of the minister today and answer the concerns of the member for Lake Nipigon. I would like to assure the member, as well as all members and the public, that safety is our absolute priority.

The Ministry of Transportation will continue to clear the roads to a standard that will allow the public to get to work, to school, and to all other destinations they need to drive to in winter.

As most members will know, doing better for less is one of the key components of the Common Sense Revolution. The voters told us that over the past five or 10 years, taxes have gone up but government service does not seem much better and in some cases is worse.

They want us to be more careful with their hard-earned dollars, and so we have found a more economical and cost-effective way to provide winter maintenance in Ontario. Instead of hiring for peak conditions, we are going to hire for the average snowfall and extend service for peak snowfall.

We believe this is the proper balance between using taxpayers' dollars efficiently and ensuring safety. This year the Ministry of Transportation has budgeted some \$130 million for winter maintenance. We have restructured that budget, resulting in a saving of approximately 5% or \$7 million.

Better technology and management means that the

ministry can operate with fewer staff and less equipment. Over the past five years, even when the member was minister, the ministry spent some \$130 million to \$140 million on winter maintenance. Within a budget of some \$130 million, we will monitor road conditions and make the changes that are necessary.

The minister insisted on having that flexibility to ensure safety standards are met. The ministry will pay particular attention to snowbelt areas to ensure all safety standards are met. To help meet those standards, we have 2,400 staff, 519 sand and salt spreaders, and 846 plows.

Patrolling for two shifts is a practice that has been going on for a number of years under the previous governments. It has been used in areas such as Kingston, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste Marie, even on parts of the 401.

In summary, we want to assure all members and the public that safety is our number one priority. We'd like to take the opportunity to remind everyone to keep their vehicles well maintained, to check on the weather and the road conditions before heading out on the road and to exercise caution when driving. And remember: Public safety is our paramount concern.

The Speaker: There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1817.



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Mercredi 18 octobre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 18 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 18 octobre 1995

The House met at 1332. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

THUNDER BAY COALITION AGAINST POVERTY

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): As most honourable members are aware, yesterday was declared the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty by the United Nations. In the spirit of this declaration, I wish to honour and salute the good work of T-CAP, the Thunder Bay Coalition Against Poverty, which last night hosted a candlelight vigil in Thunder Bay to commemorate this day.

T-CAP is to be applauded for leading a community-based fight against poverty and for its valiant attempts to catch the ear of this government.

Last month, T-CAP designed and distributed an information package aimed at educating the members of this House on cost-of-living realities for families receiving social assistance in the Thunder Bay area. In turn, they issued a challenge to the members of this Legislature by requesting that we take a few moments to complete a budgetary exercise.

The intent of their request was to illustrate the difficulties of achieving even a basic standard of living with this government's 22% cutback in social assistance levels. I am saddened to report that, to the best of my knowledge, not one Conservative member of this House was willing to accept responsibility for the devastation these cuts are causing.

Today, I wish to give praise to T-CAP and all antipoverty organizations across this province and around the world. It is abundantly clear that the Ontario government will continue to act without genuine concern on this issue and that only through community-minded work of organizations like T-CAP and the diligence of the elected opposition will the principles of compassion and cooperation be upheld in this great province.

TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO MUNICIPALITIES

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): My statement today is about cuts to unconditional grants in the north. I'd like to direct the statement to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and also the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Recently, your government has implied that there will be a 20% reduction in unconditional grants to municipalities. A reduction of this magnitude would impact greatly upon northern municipalities.

For a number of years northern municipalities have been able to obtain specific provincial grants to cover the higher costs of providing municipal services and the lack of property assessment and capacity. A reduction of this magnitude would increase property taxes to northern municipalities by 8.3%. The impact on southern Ontario municipalities would be a mere 1.2% increase in property taxes. The playing field needs to be levelled.

We have relied for years, in the north, on the northern support grant and resource equalization grant. These grants, introduced in 1973, were to reduce the financial burden resulting from higher costs attributed to the northern climate, great distances, rock and the isolation of northern Ontario communities. Poor municipalities whose average assessment was below the provincial standard were paid these grants to enable them to improve and maintain service levels without imposing excessive property taxes.

Circumstances have not changed in the north. A 20% reduction in unconditional grants to northern municipalities would be an unconscionable action by this government.

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): Last week my colleague the member for Brantford spoke in this House about Brantford being declared the prettiest city in Ontario. We congratulate member Ron Johnson and the people of Brantford.

I would like to advise the members of this House that the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, a section of my riding, had a similar honour. It was declared the prettiest town in Ontario by the Ontario Parks Association's Communities in Bloom program. In the category for communities with a population between 5,000 and 30,000, Niagara-on-the-Lake beat out municipalities such as Cobourg, Collingwood, Dryden and Elliot Lake.

As with Brantford, the judges looked at everything from general overall appearance to tidiness and environmental awareness. Apparently the judges were particularly impressed with the originality of the town's landscaping, private and public. This honour is a perfect example of what can happen when citizens and government work together for the benefit of the entire community.

I would like to send congratulations to the town's Lord Mayor, Michael Dietsch, the parks and recreation department, and all the residents for making Niagara-on-the-Lake the prettiest town in Ontario.

COMMON SENSE REVOLUTION

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): Yesterday the Minister of Community and Social Services apologized for his so-called drafting error which would have cut benefits to over 100,000 people living with disabilities. Today I'd like to speak about a number of other drafting errors, drafting errors that were contained in the Common Sense Revolution.

Take for example the drafting error on page 7, where it says, "We will not cut health care spending." It should

have read, "We will slash \$130 million from health care services across this province."

Again, on page 8, "...funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed." Who proofread it? It should have said, "We're going to take \$14 million from the justice budget to pay for our tax cut."

Another drafting error occurred on page 10, "Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut." They simply left out the words "unless they depend on the government for Wheel-Trans, housing or just plain making ends meet."

"No cuts to agriculture." Oops, that should have read, "Lots of cuts to agriculture," lots of cuts.

"No cuts to the north." They should say "\$22 million in cuts to the north." Gosh, it's hard to find good staff these days.

And when Mike Harris said, "If I fail to deliver on my commitments as Premier I will resign," he really meant to say he resigned himself to the fact that as Premier he'd fail to deliver on his commitments.

1340

INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I rise today to recognize the tremendously valuable contribution Indian friendship centres have made to community life in cities and towns across the province. The time and energy contributed on a volunteer basis and professionally to the quality of life of both the urban aboriginal community and the larger community is simply unquantifiable.

In my work as a community development professional during the very difficult early 1980s, the Indian Friendship Centre was always there. Whether it was an issue of family life, community life or economic development, they contributed with wisdom from the past, an understanding of the present and a vision of the future that was unique and always helpful.

My concern today is that this so very valuable organization is at risk, and with them, even more importantly, the people they serve. Their very heart and soul is being ripped out. The two programs central to everything they do are being discontinued. The native community worker program, which supported families at a very basic level, making ends meet and helping people keep their heads above water, and the Little Beaver program, which supported children, are gone. This is across the province, but most particularly for me and my colleague from Algoma, in both Sault Ste Marie and Hornepayne.

This is shocking and sad, but does it surprise me? Frankly, no, as the record of this government in its short mandate to date where it concerns support for families and children is abhorrent. Shame on you. Shame on you, Mike Harris.

ARTHUR KING

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): I rise today to make mention of a retirement party I had the pleasure of attending in my riding of Bruce. The guest of honour was Arthur King, a long-time resident and respected member of the community.

Mr King began his career in 1956, when he joined the Town of Mimico Police Department. He was one of the

first 17 members of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force and went on to become a private investigator and later an RCMP special constable at Cape Crocker.

Mr King began his 20 years of service with the Ontario Provincial Police in 1974. In 1983, he became the officer in charge of the OPP launch the H.H. Graham, which was moored in Tobermory and now operates from the Kincardine harbour.

Mr King continued his outstanding service as an officer of the court and retired from the force as a detective constable. His son Rob is following in his father's footsteps with the Cape Crocker police unit.

Arthur King went above and beyond the call of duty during his career by getting involved in numerous initiatives designed to improve and enhance community and police relationships. Mr King was an original member of the community policing committee serving the communities of Amabel and Albermarle. He started neighbourhood watch programs and worked on community fund-raising committees.

The evening's master of ceremonies was Sergeant Wayne Stevens, who was joined by his wife, Carol. Others in attendance included the Honourable Judge Shapiro; Chief Superintendent Coles; Tom Boyd, chair of the OPP association, District 6; and Jim Gordon, District 6 inspector. Phyllis Miller, a distinguished member of the community, presented Mr King's wife, Bev, with an heirloom ring in appreciation for her years of service as a police officer's wife.

JIM CONNELL

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): St Catharines lost one of its foremost labour leaders this week with the passing of the former president of UAW Local 199, Jim Connell.

Jim's early commitment to the trade union movement began during his days in construction and lumber camps in Algonquin Park in the winter of 1941-42, where he recognized the vulnerability of workers unprotected by the lack of a union on the site.

In St Catharines, Jim Connell made his contribution to his fellow workers as a steward and, in 1964, as president of Local 199, a position to which he was elected for 16 years.

Jim's concern and involvement was not confined to the General Motors operation alone, but extended to the community at large. The establishment of a health centre in St Catharines with an emphasis on preventive medicine, the implementation of half-price bus fares for seniors, the creation of a senior citizens' drop-in centre on Dunlop Drive, strong support for Brock University, and the building of a retirement village with low-cost units for former auto workers were projects with which he was deeply involved.

Those who were involved in the early days of the trade union movement, before legislative protection was enacted and when business was unreceptive to unionization, will remember the courage, determination and tenacity of Jim Connell and his colleagues.

There are those who have great wealth and influence, and they can look after themselves. Jim Connell set out

to defend and represent those who could not easily defend themselves, and he will be remembered with fondness and appreciation by those for whom he fought for so many years.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Today is day three in the continuing saga of the Mulroney-Harris affair.

On Monday, the member for Windsor-Riverside rose to expose the appointment of David Nash, a prominent London Mulroney Tory, to the Ontario Casino Corp by the Harris government.

Yesterday, the member for Nickel Belt rose to inform this House of the hiring of John Toogood, another Mulroney Tory, by the Harris government into the office of the Minister of Citizenship.

Today, I want to talk about yet again another Mulroney-Harris team appointment: Pauline Browes, a former Tory MP for Scarborough Centre from 1984 to 1993, a member of the Mulroney cabinet holding the portfolios of Minister of State (Environment), Minister of State (Employment and Immigration), and Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, soundly defeated in 1993 and resurrected in 1995 by the Harris government when it appointed her vice-chair of the Environmental Assessment Board.

The affair continues; stay tuned tomorrow.

HAEMODIALYSIS

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I rise in this House today to express the need for dialysis treatment in the Peterborough area. I am presenting this concern in the form of a member's statement as a result of my constituents presenting me with a petition which does not conform to standing order 36. That petition has in excess of 6,000 names.

The Peterborough area does not have adequate treatment facilities to meet the demand. For too long patients and their families have been forced to travel long distances through miserable weather for treatment, only to arrive at a facility with a long waiting list.

Over the past few months, my constituency office has been flooded with approximately 5,000 letters and phone calls from patients, their families and concerned members of the community pleading for treatment facilities in the Peterborough area. Patients requiring dialysis services cannot wait long periods of time between treatments. Timely delays are not sympathetic to patients—delays which, if they go on too long, will eventually lead to death.

This government committed during the election campaign to improve Ontario dialysis treatments, and I too publicly supported that goal.

When the government announced in August its intentions to expand facilities in Ontario, I was very pleased, as were the people of my riding. Let me congratulate the government for reinvesting in health care and, in particular, dialysis treatment.

One of those communities that is in need of help is the Peterborough riding.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today His Excellency Jozef Skolc, accompanied by His Excellency Marijan Majcen, the ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia and the president of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. Please welcome our guests.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PERSONS DAY

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): Today is Persons Day in Canada. It was 66 years ago, on October 18, 1929, that women were declared to be persons in the eyes of the law in this country. Prior to that time, only men were considered persons entitled to societal rights and privileges.

This watershed in women's history was the result of the determination and persistence of Judge Emily Murphy of Alberta and four other committed Canadian women: Henrietta Edwards, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung and Irene Parlby. Collectively known as the Famous Five, these champions of women's rights took their crusade all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

On behalf of all Ontarians, I would like to acknowledge Judge Murphy and her colleagues for their achievement on behalf of all of us who have followed them.

Since the declaration of their personhood, Canadian women have increased their presence in virtually all spheres of endeavour. Taking a page from Judge Murphy's book of creativity and determination, more women than ever have become successful business people in private industry and the operation of their own small businesses.

More women than ever are pursuing post-secondary education, their greatest prospect for economic independence. An increased number of women are entering the professions; 47% of the undergraduate law school students and 39% of undergraduate medical school students at the University of Toronto in the 1994-95 academic year were women. In all areas of life, women are working harder towards independence and self-sufficiency.

This is a challenging time for government. We are forced to make some difficult decisions: to reduce government spending in order to create an improved climate for job creation and restore hope and prosperity for Ontario.

1350

Our proposed Victims' Bill of Rights will strengthen protection for women, as well as men and children, who are victims of crime. And I am determined to work with all of my colleagues to keep our government's promise to preserve core services for women who need them most. As part of this commitment, we will preserve core services to victims of violence.

On this Persons Day, we are inspired by the determination of Judge Emily Murphy and her colleagues. We know they would be proud of the progress women have made since we first became "persons" and the contribution all women continue to make to this society. On this Persons Day in Canada, we are proud of the women who have made many advances since that early milestone in our history, and we are confident many advances still lie ahead.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): As we stand today to acknowledge and celebrate Persons Day, when 66 years ago it was declared, by the British government actually, that women were indeed persons under the Constitution, we remember those Famous Five: Henrietta Edwards, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung and Irene Parlby, led by Judge Emily Murphy, who on her very first day on the bench was in fact challenged by a fellow lawyer that she was not a person.

I would say to the minister that, while we acknowledge and celebrate the progress that women have made in this province, those women, those Famous Five, and the women of this province do not celebrate the policies of your government. Today in Ontario, women face violence, poverty and discrimination. What are you and your government doing about this?

When it comes to violence, you are closing and cutting second-stage housing. The core services of education and counselling support for women and batterers: You've cut those, you've eliminated them, and you are not doing what you say you will do when you say you will protect those core services. Women know that and they will never forgive you.

Women live in poverty, and what has been the response from your government? Your government has declared war on women and their children by cutting social assistance rates, cutting access to child care and thus cutting their access to opportunities to work, better themselves, educate themselves and protect their children.

Women face discrimination, and what has been the response from your government? Rather than amending legislation that would remove barriers in the workplace for women who face discrimination daily, you have eliminated and scrapped legislation and said to them, "Discrimination is okay, and if you have a case, you must take it to the already overburdened Human Rights Commission."

So in Ontario today, women are seeing the clock turned back on many of the progressive reforms of the past, they are seeing the clock turned back on the kind of important initiatives that will in fact see women make progress, and as we stand here on Persons Day, I would say to the minister for women's issues in Mike Harris's Ontario, to Premier Harris and to the Conservative government, that the Famous Five and all those who followed in their footsteps fighting for equal opportunity and equal rights for women in this province and across this country are turning in their graves, and they would be ashamed of you and your policies and they would be ashamed that you would rise in the House today and say this: "This is a challenging time for government. We are forced to make some difficult decisions."

What that means to the women and their children in this province is that you have declared war on them, you have turned your back on them, and you are saying to them, Madam Minister, that in your policies there is no room for compassion, there is no room for progress on those issues we have all held so dear.

Equality of opportunity and celebration of Persons Day is something that we in this House have always stood to celebrate.

Today is no celebration, and on behalf of the women and their children in this province, who depend on government policy to see that that progress continues, they have never in the history of this province seen this kind of turning back of the clock, seen this kind of regressive policy that will in fact harm women and their children. I would have expected much more from the women's minister today.

What was your response to their desire for alternatives in health care? Scrap the birthing centres. What was your answer to them on second-stage housing? You are misleading them, and I say that with passion, Minister, because in fact you've said you're not going to cut counselling, and you have done that.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): She can't say that.

Mrs Caplan: I would say that the women are not going to be fooled, and they know that your words today—

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): She accused the minister of misleading.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. Would the member take her seat, please. I'm not sure whether I heard the word "mislead" in there or not, but if it was there, the member would have the opportunity to withdraw it.

Interruption.

The Speaker: Order. I must remind the people in the gallery there can be no demonstration.

Mrs Caplan: Never before in the province of Ontario have we seen these kinds of aggressive policies as they've affected women and their children.

The Speaker: Order. I asked the honourable member if I'd heard that word in her statement, and if I did I would ask her to withdraw it.

Mrs Caplan: I recognize the word "misled" is unparliamentary, and I will withdraw it if it offends the Speaker. I think it accurately reflects the policies of this government as they have—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Further response, from the third party: the member for Riverdale.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. You always have to remember to press that button. I've made that mistake myself.

I'm happy today to stand, on behalf of our party, with the minister responsible for women's issues and the Liberal Party to acknowledge and celebrate Persons Day in Canada. As the minister stated, it is a scant 66 years ago today. When you think about it, it isn't that long ago that women were not even considered persons, and certainly none of us women who are sitting here today in this House would be here if it weren't for the women who have been mentioned previously, Henrietta Edwards, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung and Irene Parlby, known as the Famous Five, and for the hard work and perseverance they undertook to make sure that women were rightly considered to be persons.

I have a copy of the minister's statement, and if people would like to refer to the last paragraph, it states, "We know that they would be proud of the progress women have made since we first became 'persons'." It's my understanding that we always have been people; the issue here of course is that we were finally recognized 66 years ago as people.

I presume this is just a drafting error, that the minister certainly didn't mean to suggest that at one point in history we actually weren't persons. I'd like to correct that on her behalf.

Like the member from the Liberal Party, I'm saddened today. I'm celebrating with you all here today the fact that we did become recognized as people and we can now vote and participate equally in society, supposedly. But we cannot get too complacent here. There are still many, many advances we have to make, and I think everybody here in this House is aware of that.

Since this government came into power, however, it's become very clear that this is the most anti-women government we have seen in the history of this province. I would say to the women, and the men, sitting across the floor—

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Mostly men.

Ms Churley: Mostly men, correct, but I welcome the 11 Tory women here. I would say to all of you that you take a look—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Churley: I'm sorry if I sound inflammatory here today, but let me say to you that if you take a good look at the kinds of cuts that have been made by your party, in consultation I'm sure with the minister—she tells me she speaks up for women at the cabinet table—they have mostly affected, unduly and tragically affected, women and kids and therefore families.

1400

The reality is that regulated safe child care has been affected and cut by this government. The fact is that social assistance—many single parents, which means thousands of kids in this province are now going to be hungrier.

Birthing centres, which sound fundamental when you understand that birthing centres will actually save the government and taxpayers money and will also give women a choice, have been cut.

For what reason? The excuse the Minister of Health gives makes absolutely no sense. If he will look at the documentation that has been provided to him, actually

these birthing centres would save the government money, so why cut them? Job training has been cut. Employment equity has been cut.

The minister talks about core services to victims of violence and about the Victims' Bill of Rights. Well, let me tell you, the Victims' Bill of Rights is something that I and I think my party would have felt very comfortable supporting, but now we find out that they're taking the guts out of the Victims' Bill of Rights and are taking away the very support services that women, victims of violence, need to help them get out of their oppressive situations, to help them and their kids be removed, to get the kind of counselling they need and the safe haven they need. This goes against the grain of what this government is talking about in terms of victims' rights.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, yesterday you apologized to the House for what you claimed was a drafting error, a drafting error that had the effect of changing the legal definition of "disabled." I want to bring to your attention today a second change to that regulation that also changes the definition of "disabled," a change that you neither noted nor apologized for yesterday.

The October 4 edition of the Ontario Gazette contains a regulation change that reduces benefits for people who are permanently unemployable and require another person to provide them with daily physical assistance. This change would reduce benefits by hundreds of dollars for thousands of people.

We are now talking about two changes to your regulations, not one—and I emphasize, two changes—that do exactly the same thing, that change the definition of "disabled" in exactly the same way. Minister, is this just a coincidence, and are you still going to try to tell the people of Ontario that this was all just a drafting error?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): There's not really much benefit or sense in having the leader of the official opposition indicate that there's some sort of apocalyptic scenery out there, that creates such anxiety in the disabled community. I think we should focus on the real issue here. The real issue is that no one's cheque was affected, there was never any intention to have anyone's cheque affected, and in fact the computer system was never set up to do anything different than issue the same cheques again.

Mrs McLeod: I'm certainly not attempting to be apocalyptic; I'm simply dealing with some facts that we're finding difficult to explain. I would remind the minister that these are facts: You told the House that you had no plan to change the definition of "disabled"; you claimed that a regulation that changed the definition of "disabled"—exactly against what you said you were going to do—was a drafting error; and now we find we have two changes in the regulation, two changes that do the same thing.

I suggest that no one can believe that your officials who draft your regulations could just happen to make

exactly the same mistake twice. These two regulation changes did not just turn up. Somebody had to give the original direction to bring in changes to the regulation that would change the definition of "disabled." That's a change that would reduce the number of disabled people on welfare and a change that would clearly break your government's commitment to protect benefits for the disabled.

Minister, if you did not give that original direction to change the definition of "disabled," who, exactly, did?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I want to point out, first of all, that the section in question in the regulations did not explicitly refer to the disabled in any way, shape or form. Secondly, the matter has been corrected.

But once again I think we're overlooking the real issue here, and the real issue is that nobody's cheque was affected and there was no intention ever to do so, and in fact no member of the disabled community has been affected in any way whatsoever.

Mrs McLeod: We realize that once the minister had discovered that he was about to bring in a regulation change that broke his government's commitment, he acted to make sure that did not happen.

The question is, what was the original intent and how did a regulation come into law that effectively would have changed the definition of "disabled"? Minister, I simply cannot believe that this was a drafting error when it occurred twice, two significant changes which would have had that very serious impact. There is a consistency in those changes that makes it difficult to believe they were the result of a drafting error.

But beyond that, there is the fact that you signed these regulations with those significant changes there. I guess I just finally have to ask you, Minister: When someone puts something in front of you for your signature before it becomes law, what do you do? Do you just pull out your rubber stamp and apply it where your executive assistant has marked an X? Is it your policy to sign now and apologize later?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I made a very clear explanation yesterday of what had transpired, in a ministerial statement. I would like to address this again, that certainly the section did not explicitly refer in any way, shape or form to the disabled, anywhere. Clearly I admit it was a mistake, and clearly I apologized to the House already.

I'd like to take the opportunity, though, to indicate to both the Leader of the Opposition and the former government that they had 10 years in which to do a huge correction, which we have undertaken to do. That correction is to take the seniors and the disabled off the welfare system, where they should never have been in the first place. They had the opportunity to do this. This is what this government is committed to do. We are committed to support the disabled community.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question, leader of the official opposition.

Mrs McLeod: As a matter of record, I don't think it was ever the intention over the last 10 years of any government to change the definition of "disabled," so no wonder it was not done. I submit it was the intention of

this minister to change the definition of "disabled" and that's why the changes were made. But the saga will continue, and I do want to turn to other significant issues.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I address my second question to the Minister of Health, because I want to ask the Minister of Health today about hospital restructuring, which he addresses often in this Legislature. As he knows, in communities across Ontario there are indeed dedicated professionals and community members who have put enormous amounts of work into making hospital services in their communities more efficient and more effective.

He also knows, because he speaks of it often, that many of those projects are anticipated to create savings in health care, savings that could be turned back into the community. In fact, this minister's government committed itself to sharing those savings with communities. They understood, in those communities, that this commitment made by the government meant that their savings, the savings they would make in their communities, would be reinvested in their communities to provide better care for the people in that community.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put the question, please.

Mrs McLeod: The minister has indicated that those communities may get some of the savings, but not all of them. I think the people who are working hard to make the system better deserve to know exactly what share of those savings they're going to get. I ask the minister if he will tell us what percentage of those savings the communities can keep and can put back into health care in their communities. Is it going to be 50 cents on the dollar, or 20 cents on the dollar? Exactly what is their share going to be?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I appreciate the question from the honourable member. It's an important policy matter and one which our government has been very clear on.

1410

The fact of the matter is, if we look at the interim report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council and their hospital restructuring study, we notice that that report indicates that there are reinvestments to be made in Metropolitan Toronto. But in no way is that report asking for the full amount of savings to be reinvested in Metro, because that district health council, along with all the other district health councils in the province, realizes that investments have to be made in priority areas throughout the province. That's the commitment of this government, and we'll be guided by those local studies.

Mrs McLeod: Let me ask you very specifically about the Windsor restructuring project, because yesterday representatives of Windsor hospitals and the Essex County District Health Council met with your officials to get your very specific response to Windsor's proposals to restructure their health care system.

I think you know that people in Windsor have worked very long and very hard to come up with a proposal that

would maintain quality health care in Windsor with savings of up to \$22 million per year. In fact I think Windsor has been seen as a leader in coming up with exactly the kind of restructuring along with the savings that you believe are needed. Now they're looking for an answer from you as to how much of those savings they will be able to reinvest in their community.

Once again, your officials either couldn't or wouldn't tell them. They would not provide any details. So I'm going to ask you, on behalf of the people in Windsor, what portion of the savings generated by their hard work will be reinvested in health care in that community, and how much are you going to scoop up to pay down the deficit?

Hon Mr Wilson: If we were to follow the formula suggested by the honourable member, and that is that we can only invest dollars in a community once they've found the savings, we could never get started on restructurings. Windsor is a perfect example. It needs several millions of dollars from other parts of the health care system and other parts of the province in order to make its capital renovations to get on to saving, down the road, that \$22 million a year.

So it's exactly our point: I have to take money from other parts of the system to invest up front in these communities that are to restructure and that are asking us for help in restructuring, and that money has to come from other parts in the system as an upfront investment. Down the road, we will reinvest savings out of the \$22 million in the Windsor community—

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): Where do you come from?

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Wilson: —as guided by that community and their restructuring study.

Mr Duncan: Shame on you.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Windsor-Walkerville is out of order, and I won't warn him again.

Hon Mr Wilson: You've got to get it from somewhere else.

Mrs McLeod: This government committed itself to sharing any savings from restructuring with the communities. There weren't conditions and caveats put on that. They made a commitment to share the savings, and I am simply asking this minister what kind of a share communities can expect to get, because I think communities across this province are going to look to Windsor. But it's a test case for you, Minister, because every community, whether it is Windsor or Ottawa or Toronto or Sudbury or Thunder Bay, where there are restructuring studies going on is going to wonder what incentive there will be for them to make these kinds of savings.

I have a document that came out before the election campaign which talked about Mike Harris's five commitments to health care. Number 3 is, "A Harris government will encourage front-line health care administrators in local communities to develop new means of delivering existing services."

Minister, I suggest to you that there is one kind of encouragement those communities need, and that is the incentive of being able to use those savings to improve the health care for people in their communities, and yet you will not offer any assurance, you will make no commitment to Windsor or to any other community.

I ask you today to give the people of Windsor and Toronto and Ottawa and Sudbury and Thunder Bay and all those communities doing restructuring studies a clear commitment that the dollars they save in their communities will go back to provide health care in their communities.

Hon Mr Wilson: I would hope the overriding incentive of those communities—and I know that the overriding incentive of those communities—is not the carrots put out by the previous government that may have said, "You'll get a dollar-for-dollar exchange in this restructuring."

The fact of the matter is, the overall incentive, I know, from talking to those communities, having met with Windsor on August 29, is that they want to improve quality of health care and the availability of health care to the people of Windsor. That is their incentive, and they very much understand that we have to take money from other areas of the health care system in order for them to get started on their restructuring, and we're having that discussion right now.

If we were to fund something like the Ottawa Heart Institute based on the honourable member's formula, which says just the people who live in that community pay some sort of a per-head share of that institute, then what about the people from all over eastern Ontario, North Bay and Thunder Bay who have access to that institute? That Heart Institute serves beyond Ottawa-Carleton. Money comes from other parts of the health care system, as an example, to beef up that institute so that a vast majority of Canadians in eastern Ontario, or Ontarians, have access to that institute.

A dollar-for-dollar formula doesn't make sense. The caveat in the system is to improve the quality of care. That's the level of cooperation I'm getting from the front-line providers, that's the level of cooperation we're seeing in these restructuring studies, and I commend the local people for that understanding of the system.

TAX REDUCTION

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I have a question to the Premier. No doubt the people of the province who look at newspaper headlines will be rather surprised to find out that there are two completely different interpretations of comments the Premier made yesterday with respect to taxation. Now, that's not news, but that's interesting.

I wonder if the Premier could perhaps help us out, because there are a great many people who have seen the promise of a 30% tax cut, half of which would come in year one, as being an absolutely rock-solid commitment by the government. I wonder if the Premier can confirm in fact that that is the case.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I appreciate the question because yesterday in a scrum, I think, and in response to the same question—the leader of the New Democratic Party is quite right—there were two different headlines. All I can do is tell you that I was asked, as a

result of the slowdown, to create jobs and get the economy moving and consumer confidence: Could I cut taxes sooner than our first budget? In response to that I said I'd like to, but the mess we were left is so big, then balancing the massive overspending that was there and balancing for the deficit, that I felt it would be most responsible to wait until our first budget. In this case I would say that the Toronto Star had it quite accurately and the Globe and Mail did not.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): What do you think of their editorials?

Mr Rae: I think they're both wonderful newspapers myself. They've certainly treated me with great kindness over the years.

But I wonder if the Premier can tell us, is this commitment to the 15% tax cut in year one good regardless of what happens with respect to economic growth in the revenue situation in the province over the next six months and the projections which may be changed as a result of the various changes that are taking place across the country? Is the Premier saying that regardless of what is happening on the revenue side, regardless of what takes place in the economy, regardless of any other events that may take place, the commitments that are made are simply not going to be changed? Is that what the Premier is saying?

Hon Mr Harris: You know, for the last 10 years we've had governments tax and tax and tax and try and spend. I believe the member's first budget said: "You know, we're a little smarter than all the other nine provinces. We're going to spend our way out of this recession by spending government money, money that we don't have, and run up a \$10-billion deficit."

Quite frankly, that did not work and government spending did not stimulate the economy. Now we have economist after economist telling us that we need—including, by the way, the Canadian Labour Congress talking about the declining purchasing power. That's what's undermining the ability of consumers to help spend the economy out of the recession—not government, consumers.

1420

I agree with the Canadian Labour Congress senior economist Kevin Hayes that, if we want jobs in this province, and that's what we want and that's what we were elected for, we must encourage consumer confidence. Nothing will do that better than getting our personal income tax rates more in line with other jurisdictions and putting those dollars in the hands of people. They will in turn create the jobs. The answer, quite simply, is yes. It's what we ran on, it's what we committed to and it's what we will do.

Mr Rae: I take it then, from what the Premier is saying, since that commitment is rock solid, regardless of what else is happening on the revenue side, that if the government finds that its revenues are falling more seriously as a result of the recession, or whatever you want to call what's happened in the last few months, and its determination to persist in the tax cut regardless of circumstances, regardless of anything else happening in

the world—this is an ideological commitment which the government has made—can we interpret that to mean, therefore, that with the decline in revenue and with the clear warning from all the rating agencies that the income tax cut is, to quote DBRS, our friends and friends of all governments—when they say the largest single hurdle to the balanced fiscal track projected in the plan and the CSR is the 30% personal income tax cut, can the Premier therefore confirm for the House that the magnitude of the cuts that will be required this year to keep the province on fiscal track will be far, far larger than anything intimated in the Common Sense Revolution?

Hon Mr Harris: When we looked over the last five years at the record of the member's government, the tax instruments the New Democratic Party brought in—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Harris: And the Finance minister who slammed us with these deficits is now interjecting. I would have thought his record would have spoken well enough for itself. It did in the campaign anyway. The New Democratic Party hiked taxes over three budgets the equivalent of about \$4 billion. Obviously it depends on economic activity. Had it been higher, it could have been more, or it may have been a little less. What we are dealing with is about \$4 billion.

In our commitment, when we were drafting the commitment to cut taxes, we said, you know, the New Democratic Party hiked taxes about \$4 billion, destroyed all these jobs, put more people on welfare, destroyed hope and opportunity for women and children in the future of this province, and it was a backwards policy.

I can give you 50 quotes if you want, from DBRS and from Wood Gundy and from other economists who have indicated that if you want jobs in this province and you want growth and you want a future, don't do what the New Democratic Party did; in fact do the opposite. That's what we're doing: reducing spending, getting it under control; at the same time we get our tax rates back down to where they were pre-Bob Rae. That's what the rates in Ontario will be.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question, third party.

Mr Rae: That's hubris, spelled h-u-b-r-i-s, Mr Speaker.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Bob Rae (York South): The question I have is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I wanted to ask the minister some questions which arise out of the answers that he's given over the last several days on this issue of the change in the definition of "disability" and "disabled people" and one can only presume the change in the definition of "permanently unemployable people" and the government's plan to create something called an "income support plan" for people who are disabled and seniors.

Could the minister now tell us, is it the government's intention to proceed by way of regulatory change again or is it the government's intention to bring in legislation which would allow for a process of dialogue with the people of the province? How is it that the government

plans to change the definition of "disabled" and to deal with the question of the permanently unemployable, having made its mistake?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): This all speaks to the basic problem of the system as it exists today. The problem is of course, and we recognize as a party, that the disabled community should not be on the welfare system. Certainly the previous government had the opportunity to change the system, and in fact it chose not to do so. We're having consultations at this minute with the disabled community to get their input into things. That's why right now there have been no decisions made.

Mr Rae: There's a major difference in terms of consultation; there's a major difference in terms of the members of the Legislature and members of the public having a chance to see what rules are being changed. One of the things we've all realized—I hope the minister has realized it and certainly we've all realized it; it was with the stroke of two pens, the pen that was in your hand and the pen that was in the hand of the chairman of cabinet—regulatory changes can be made which affect the fate of tens of thousands of people.

I don't know about you, Minister, but I think a lot of people woke up and suddenly realized that you have an extraordinary amount of power and so does the chairman of cabinet. All you have to do, the two of you, is, with the stroke of those pens, affect the fate of tens of thousands of people.

Speaking on behalf of members of my party, and I would suspect for a few other people around here, I don't want that to happen again. If it was a mistake, I don't want it repeated.

The mistake was trying to do too much by way of regulation; affecting too much the condition of people by unilateral, regulatory change which is in the exclusive hands of two people. It's absurd. No people should have that kind of power in their hands.

Therefore, Minister, I'm asking you, will you commit today that you will make no further changes to the condition of life of people who are disabled or who are permanently unemployable without a full process of bringing in legislation, full debate in the House, full discussion with the disabled community, first, second and third reading, a full and adequate public debate with hearings across the province? Will you at least give that assurance today so that people aren't subject to the whim of your pen?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It's very refreshing to find that finally the leader of the third party and myself can agree on something in the House. Certainly neither of us want anything like this to happen again. Certainly we've taken steps to assure it doesn't happen again, and since it was brought up once again, the mistake has been corrected.

We fully intend to make sure that we treat the disabled community with sensitivity in all matters. We have a commitment to the disabled community. Our commitment is to make sure that they're treated fairly, and certainly being on the welfare system right now does not recognize that. Mr Rae: There are two ways to take people off the welfare system: You can either change the law or, with the stroke of a pen, you can cancel people's benefits, you can redefine them; you can redefine "disability."

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Uh-uh.

Mr Rae: The Minister of Agriculture says, "Uh-uh." Well, it's true. You can redefine "disability" the way you've done it.

Interjections.

Mr Rae: If he wants to rephrase his interjection, I would have no objection.

I would say directly to the minister, he surely understands this simple difference. It's a simple difference, but it has major impact. You either commit as a government to legislation or you commit as a minister to say: "I know best. I promise in a paternalistic way"—and if I may say, sir, your answer was exceptionally paternalistic when you said to the disabled people, "Don't worry; we'll take care of you."

1430

The disabled people of this province don't want your charity; they want justice and they want due process. That's what they want. That's what they require. Will you commit, Minister, not to being paternalistic about it and not just saying, "I'll try not to make another mistake again," if indeed it was a mistake, but to legislation which will ensure that there will be no further whimsical, arbitrary mistakes made by you and the member for Leeds-Grenville in signing that document and in cutting people off their benefits until it was discovered by mistake?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Once again I'm delighted to be able to agree with the leader of the third party. We both want to have justice for the disabled community. In fact, we have as a party indicated clearly, through the election and clearly now today and into the future, that the disabled community is a priority for us. Certainly our aim is to make sure that the disabled community is treated with equity, fairness and sensitivity, and that's what this government is committed to do.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): To the Minister of Transportation: Minister, as you know, when your government scrapped photo-radar they assured the province and the motorists across Ontario that they were going to introduce some very comprehensive new safety measures. Yet all we've seen from you in recent weeks is cutbacks to safety.

For instance, on Monday we found out that you arbitrarily cut \$6.5 million from snowplowing, sanding, salting on our highways, and basically reducing safety in winter conditions.

Today we see another safety initiative on the chopping block, and that is the emergency safety patrol which has helped motorists in the GTA and on your highways. For years they have served as a safety partner for the motorists on the highways. Yet this is now on the chopping block. I ask you, Minister, how can you justify standing up and giving lip service to safety when you're cutting back on safety on a daily basis in this province? How do you justify that?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): This government is committed to fiscal responsibility, and this particular program is a duplication of services. I would like to assure the public that presently the private sector is handling that service quite capably.

Mr Colle: Again, I find that really astonishing that the minister is basically passing off to the private sector the safety of the motorists on Ontario highways.

I don't know if the minister realizes that the emergency safety patrol helped over 1,500 motorists last month, that these men and women on the emergency safety patrol are of great benefit to the people who are stranded on our highways.

I wonder, when will the minister realize that you can't leave safety out there—you're playing Russian roulette with people's safety—and hope that perhaps some tow truck driver will come around and take care of the job that you're supposed to be doing, and not to pass the buck to someone out there on a whim? When are you going to take safety as a priority and put people's lives ahead of cuts? When are you going to put safety ahead of cuts, Minister?

Hon Mr Palladini: We still have the OPP out there, who are going to help our people who are stranded. We have highway cameras that will identify a breakdown or an accident, where we can quickly respond. Most people have a cellular phone in their car, and the most important thing about this is that we are eliminating—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. Would the member take his seat, please.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Point of privilege, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: When the Speaker is standing, the members will resume their seats. Would the minister finish his question. The member for Lake Nipigon.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): My rights as a member—and I'm offended. Where I live we can see the earth's curvature, never mind your cell phone. How can the minister generalize on behalf of everybody, including the poor people in Lake Nipigon? Shame on you, Minister.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. New question, third party. Leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: Mr Speaker, I would wish that I had the privilege of using a cell phone in my part of the province. There are no functioning cell phones for MPPs or anyone else—

The Speaker: Order. The member's out of order. New question, third party.

EGLINTON WEST SUBWAY

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I also have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, I wanted to ask you a question about the Eglinton West subway,

which is an issue that I think a great many people feel very strongly about across the city of Toronto and indeed in all of the greater Toronto area.

I wonder if the minister can confirm that while the startup costs for the subway in the first year of construction were \$53 million, it's going to cost as much as \$41.9 million for the wind-down and the close-out. In other words, you're going to be spending almost as much to close down the project as was originally spent with respect to the startup of the project.

I wonder if the minister can explain the logic of this kind of cost. I wonder if he can explain the logic of cutting off thousands of jobs in construction and thousands of jobs in other areas as a result of the construction. And what kind of hope can he offer to those people who have seen this project as an important element of building a civilized community in the northwestern part of Toronto?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): The honourable member also knows the fiscal situation that his government put us in. We had absolutely no choice but to be responsible people and managers.

It's very plain and simple: This province, the people of Ontario, cannot afford the Eglinton subway. We don't have the money and we cannot afford to carry the debt.

Mr Rae: Well, it's the person sitting next to him who a year and a half ago spoke these words quoted in the Toronto Star on February 12, 1994. He says: "You can never get a major project done because there's always an election. Every three years you have a new bunch of clowns trying to make a name for themselves." I therefore want to ask the minister: Given the comments that the Premier made earlier in which the Premier clearly stated that the first priority was the tax cut, and it's the tax cut that's driving the size of all the other expenditure cuts that you're making—that's exactly what's taking place—

Interjections.

Mr Rae: You don't like it. It's exactly there. You don't like it but it's true.

I want to ask the minister-

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The Minister of Housing is out of order.

Mr Rae: I want to ask the minister directly this question: Does he not see that an investment of this kind, an investment in GO Transit, an investment in improving the basic infrastructure of Metropolitan Toronto, is an investment that is important not for the next three years, not for the next five years, but for the next 20, 30 and 40 years? And is he really saying that he can't conceive of this project going ahead? Is that what he's telling the people of Toronto today?

Hon Mr Palladini: I would like to, number one, assure the honourable member that this government is committed to balance the budget. Also, I would like to inform the honourable member that this government is interested in and committed to giving the people of Ontario a balanced transportation system. That is our commitment.

PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I have a question for the Minister of Health. Minister, you will know that several months ago you granted eight Bill 50 exemptions to help address the problems of doctor shortages in northern Ontario communities. Minister, these exemptions helped to address the shortage of specialists in eight communities, of course including one which was Kenora, in my riding.

1440

Unfortunately, there are still dozens of other communities in the north and indeed across this province which are still in urgent need of physicians and specialists. Dryden, as the minister will know, has been searching for a general surgeon for over three years. That's three years, again to the Minister of Health. Now Sioux Lookout again is in need of a surgeon, and compared to Dryden they've only begun their search.

Can the minister explain what he is doing to ensure that the people of Sioux Lookout and Dryden will not have to wait another three years until their needs are met?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I sincerely do appreciate the question from the member for Kenora in that we have discussed this among ourselves, I've discussed it with other representatives from the north—just a few weeks back, of course, with the North Shore communities. A massive number of representatives from that area were down around the AMO conference and the Honourable—ex-Honourable—Gilles Pouliot was there.

Interjections: Oh.

Hon Mr Wilson: He's still an honourable member, but he's not a cabinet minister.

It's a serious matter. I have signed Bill 50 exemptions for quite a few physicians to come into this province where we couldn't get physicians to come out of Metro Toronto, for example, or out of our med schools and go into these underserviced areas. I live in a community that's only 55 minutes north of Toronto that also has the same problem—not on the scale that you face in your riding—and I am prepared as a matter of policy and I've said it very clearly that if those communities find a physician from out of province and that physician is qualified by the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Ontario, at this present time I will not hesitate to grant a Bill 50 exemption.

Mr Miclash: Let me remind the minister of some of the things that he and his leader said about this issue when they sat on this side of the House. In December 1991, Mr Harris said, "Many northern Ontario residents are now seriously concerned about access to specialists in the north." In May 1993, you, Minister, said to the NDP minister of the time, "Minister, your government's slash-and-burn assault on health care has put the people of northern Ontario in a precarious position" by rationing physicians' services. In July 1993, you said, again to the then Minister of Health, "Because of your failure to deal with this critical shortage of specialists, the problem has reached a boiling point in northern Ontario."

In the last two years, nothing has really changed except your point of view. Will you give your assurance and

commitment to the people of northern Ontario and the people of Dryden and Sioux Lookout that their health care needs will be met?

Hon Mr Wilson: I'm doing everything I can to ensure that we live up to the commitment that I know all members of this House from all parties share, and that is what the honourable member mentioned, to ensure that his constituents and the people of Ontario get the health care that they need and indeed deserve, because they all pay taxes in this province and medicare is to be universally accessible.

Something has changed and I want to just correct, perhaps, the honourable member on one point. Something has changed and that is, for the first time in several months, the government of the day is sitting down with the OMA in very serious discussions and coming forward with solutions in a partnership to solve the problem the honourable member is talking about. It has been some months since the government was the NDP government and in fact I would say during their term of office it's been a long time since serious discussions around this issue have occurred. Those discussions are occurring right now and I'm very confident that we're going to come forward with a solution in the very near future.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I have a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I've already raised with the minister before concerns of our caucus with respect to cutbacks to the children's aid societies and the major cuts in staff at Halton, at the Frontenac children's aid, at the Durham children's aid, Metro Catholic children's aid, Hastings children's aid and Thunder Bay.

Today, I'd like to raise with the minister the major cuts that are going to take place at the children's aid of Metropolitan Toronto; announced recently that they will not fill any of their staff vacancies, only by exemption, leaving more than 40 full-time vacancies by the end of this year. They're also going to terminate an additional 10 staff members who are on contract positions, and those are the cuts only put in place this year to deal with the 5% cut in budgets to the children's aid societies that you've already announced. There will be more major cuts next year.

When we were in government, and I'm sure the same is the case now for you, the ministry always prepared impact statements. I'd like the minister today to tell us what the impacts are at the children's aid societies of the cuts and what the impact will be on children, either in the care of children's aids or that are being supervised by the children's aid societies. What were those impacts and would you file those impact statements with the House?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): Caring for our children is a priority for our government, and that's why we're spending over \$335 million a year in support of children's aid societies, and across this province they can provide services for children in need.

It would be uncaring to go on with the status quo and pretend, as past governments have, that there are no

consequences. There are a lot of consequences and it's time right now for us to look. It's time to pay the piper and, frankly, we are there and we're going to assure people that we are going to protect the children.

Mr Cooke: If you read that answer, I think people would agree it doesn't make any sense.

The cuts to the children's aid society is going to mean that there are fewer law enforcement officers to enforce the Family and Children's Services Act. I'd like to ask the minister very simply, can he guarantee to the House and to the public that all responses to complaints about reports of alleged physical or sexual abuse, all the time lines in the act will be met and that all regulations with respect to regular visits to monitor the progress of children in the care of the children's aid societies or families under supervision under the Family and Children's Services Act will be met, and if they are not met, he will take total responsibility himself?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The children's aid societies will continue to live up to their legal obligations and we will continue to provide resources to help them in order for them to meet their legal mandate.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question. The member for Lincoln.

Mr Frank Sheehan (Lincoln): Let me offer my belated formal congratulations on your election as Speaker.

ANTI-HATE LAWS

Mr Frank Sheehan (Lincoln): I have a question for the Attorney General. It's recently been reported that you are lobbying the federal government to strengthen legislation regarding hate crimes. Efforts to protect Ontarians from hate crimes and racism are admirable. What the people of Ontario would like to know is, is the government lobbying the federal government for new hate legislation?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Lincoln for a good question. Ontario is not lobbying the federal government regarding issues pertaining to hate crimes. We are at the present time part of a federal-provincial working group involving most provinces in this country, looking at the existing hate crimes and making a determination as to whether they are sufficient and, if not, what kinds of changes should be made. That is the involvement that the Ontario government has in looking at an issue of important potential law reform.

Mr Sheehan: Ontarians are concerned about freedom of speech and association. What are you doing to ensure that when you're combating hate crimes, you are not infringing on freedom of speech for the average Ontarian?

Hon Mr Harnick: As I have indicated, there is a federal-provincial working group looking at hate laws and looking at how they can perhaps be made better. In the course of doing that, those hate laws must stand up to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in this province. That would be the protection we all desire in terms of freedom of speech and freedom of expression, and that is very much part of the work this group is doing.

SPENDING REDUCTIONS

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question would have been to the Premier, but he had to leave early, and understandably, so I'll ask the question to the Chair of Management Board. Last week, as the minister will know, the government released a report showing that the economy, in the first six months of the year, was in a negative growth position, technically in a recession. You also released last week a report showing that Ontario had lost 32,000 jobs from December to September. After two years of growth, we have lost 32,000 jobs.

1450

Earlier today the Premier confirmed that it is your intention to proceed with the \$5-billion tax cut. My question is this: Knowing now what you know about the economy, and knowing that during the campaign you promised that you would cut spending by \$6 billion and it is now clear that it has to be substantially higher than that, will you give the people of Ontario the number now of cuts that have to be made in order for you to balance your budget?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I think the Premier answered that question earlier today. When we took office, we recognized a very difficult financial position: We were facing a deficit of some \$10.6 billion. We felt it was incumbent upon this government to act quickly. We've done so by reducing the deficit by \$1.9 billion to \$8.7 billion. Further cuts, as the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has indicated, are coming. The growth in the economy is not what the previous government forecast.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Where are you taking us?

Hon David Johnson: I'm looking at the previous Minister of Finance, who indicated a growth of 4.3%. It obviously hasn't been achieved in the first quarter. We've indicated that there will be further announcements this fall. The Minister of Finance will come forward with a statement this fall with regard to the situation, particularly to the transfer partners. Next spring, there will be the first full budget of this government, which will announce the tax cuts and further reductions in expenses of the province of Ontario to lead to the balancing of the budget.

Mr Phillips: Let me just say that as we look at the numbers, whatever numbers you have revealed to us, using those it now appears that you are going to have to cut roughly \$9 billion. Just so everybody in the province understands, that is a 30% cut in your spending. You said you would not touch health care, so it's 30% of everything else.

I would like you, Minister, to confirm today that the number is \$9 billion. If it's not \$9 billion, tell the people what it is, because we now know you are 100% committed to your tax cut. We understand that. But we want to know and the people of Ontario want to know, what does it therefore mean in terms of reduction? As we look at the numbers, it is a 30% cut in everything else. If that is not the number, give us the right number today, Minister. The people of Ontario are entitled to know that.

Hon David Johnson: I find it somewhat ironic that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt is asking the question with regard to \$9 billion, because I think back to the period from 1987 to 1990, when the spending of the province of Ontario went up by \$10.4 billion, a spending increase of \$10.4 billion in three years of the government represented by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. To a large degree, and I'm sure the former Minister of Finance will confirm this, that is why we're in the mess we're in today, that the spending prior to 1990 went through the roof.

As a result of the spending of that government and the deficits from the former government, yes, there are significant expenditure reductions that will have to take place.

This government is planning to live within its means, which is what the people of the province of Ontario are asking. Your answer will come in the statement of the Minister of Finance this fall and the first full budget of the minister next spring.

RENT REGULATIONS

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): My question is for the minister of what was formerly the Ministry of Housing. I would like to ask a question of the present Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The minister will know that today the United Tenants of Ontario is holding a press conference in our legislative precinct to speak out against some of the actions you have taken as a government up to now with regard to housing and some of the things you're planning on doing in the future.

We all know far too well what you've done around the non-profit sector. We know what you intend to do around supportive housing. We know you are now talking openly about doing away with rent control, something tenants across this province will pay for dearly and, I will say, that you will pay for dearly come the next election, because tenants won't forget that. At the same time you're moving towards the privatization of some 84,000 units across this province that filed themselves within the rent control.

The United Tenants of Ontario, in its press conference today, is going to be talking about it. I'd like to quote to you from their press release: "The landlord lobby has been declaring the end of rent control."

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would you put your question, please.

Mr Bisson: Here's the question: "The landlord lobby has been declaring the end of rent control. Without legislated controls...." You have put before this House and before everyone in this province that you plan on doing away with the community partners program, money that funds tenants to be able to advocate on behalf of tenants across this province to speak out on issues important to them. Do you think it's fair that you're out there muzzling tenants by pulling funding out from under their feet at the same time you're supposed to be advocating for tenants?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): This government campaigned on a program

of deficit reduction. Every government program has been and will continue to be reviewed for every saving possible. The community partners program is absolutely no exception, and while no decision has been made yet on the amount, I can tell you that they can expect to have a reduction in their program.

Mr Bisson: The problem is that most tenants out there don't have the resources available to landlords across this province to advocate on their behalf when it comes to issues of rent.

I would like to quote from a document that came to my attention just recently that talks about something actually quite alarming. This document is from the Fair Rental Policy Organization of Ontario, in which they write to their members, landlords across this province, saying the following, and this is very disturbing: "We are now working with the Mike Harris Conservatives at Queen's Park to develop a sound alternative to Ontario's infamous rent controls. If we do our jobs well, I am convinced that one year from today rent control as we know it will be just a bad memory." They go on to say that they're working with you in order to make changes in human rights legislation and the Landlord and Tenant Act.

What's even more important and very interesting is that this document says, "You, as a landlord, are not likely to meet with the Premier and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on a regular basis, so we do so on your behalf."

The Speaker: Would you put your question, please.

Mr Bisson: Here comes the question: "We work daily behind the scenes"—behind the scenes—"with bureaucrats and political staff to create a better environment for housing across this province." Are you working behind closed doors with landlords to eliminate rent controls in this province?

Hon Mr Leach: This government works with all members of our society. We work with landlords; we work with tenants. We try and cooperate to make sure that we provide services to everybody.

We have said we will not continue with the rent control program. It doesn't work. It's not good for tenants; it's not good for landlords. We're going to get rid of the rent control program. We intend to bring in a program that will provide good protection to tenants, something they don't have now.

SHELTER ALLOWANCES

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: On Tuesday, October 3, in this House the minister stated, "We have been encouraging...the sponsors that were involved in the coop housing program to go out and...get the bricks and mortar up and we'll provide the subsidies to the people of Ontario who need the help." Does this mean, Minister, that you have developed a shelter subsidy program?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for the question. This government has made a commitment to get out of the non-profit housing business. That was a boondoggle that is costing the taxpayers of the province

of Ontario hundreds of millions of dollars a year. This government lived up to and fulfilled that commitment.

We also committed to introduce a shelter subsidy program to assist those members of our society who truly require help in their housing needs. I can guarantee you that we will live up to that question as well.

Mrs Ross: Will you give us some idea today of how long it will be before we have a shelter subsidy program in place subsidizing people and not buildings?

Hon Mr Leach: The minister and the ministry, as we speak, presently are developing the details of the program. It's going to be an extensive program, as I mentioned. We're going to ensure that it will provide benefits to tenants, benefits they don't have now, protection they don't have now. I'm very pleased to advise that we will be bringing forward a program for the shelter allowances perhaps very early in the new year, as quickly as the people in the ministry can get the facts together, and we can continue to do that.

Again, what we're interested in is not bricks and mortar; we're interested in providing protection to the tenants of Ontario.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I move that the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1503 to 1533.

The Speaker: Will the members take their seats, please.

All those in favour of Mr Sterling's motion will please rise and remain standing until you are counted.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 71, the nays 34.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LABOUR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL ET L'EMPLOI

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Order number 4.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller): Fourth order, second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations, Mrs Witmer.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, dealing with the item that has been

called before the House this afternoon: The order that has been called is in fact on the order paper, but there is also another item on the order paper, and that is the government motion to establish the standing committees of the Legislature.

The rules of the House are absolutely clear. On page 72 of the rules it states, "Within the first 10 sessional days following the commencement of each session in a Parliament the membership of the following standing committees shall be appointed for the duration of the session." It does not say "may be established"; it says "shall be appointed." In other words, that motion has to be debated and the committees of the Legislature must be in the process of being established.

Mr Speaker, as I said before, it doesn't say "may," it doesn't give any discretion to you, it doesn't give any discretion to the government; it says we must proceed. It is my belief that unless we proceed with that motion today, the Legislature cannot proceed. The standing orders are absolutely clear. There's no discretion, and I'm asking that the government either call that motion, which is properly printed and notice has been given, or that you adjourn the House.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I will recess the House for 10 minutes and come back with my decision.

The House recessed from 1537 to 1547.

The Speaker: It is clear that our rules require that the membership of standing committees be appointed within the first 10 sessional days of the session. Yesterday was the 10th sessional day. Yesterday, the acting government House leader did move the required motion to establish committee membership. Following debate on the motion, the House agreed to the adjournment of the debate. As of today, the 11th day, the motion has not been adopted and committee members have not been approved.

I recognize that the acting government House leader did attempt to comply with the standing orders by introducing the motion yesterday. I also observe that the existence of committees is an important and necessary element for the proper functioning of this assembly. This has been ruled previously on a number of occasions.

It is only in very rare circumstances that the Speaker would use his authority to impose sanctions on this House. I can only advise the acting government House leader to take note of the situation and to take the appropriate steps, along with your colleagues in the opposition, to come to a speedy resolution of this problem. I myself am available to assist in whatever way I can.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): Mr Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 7.

Mr Cooke: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just need some help understanding exactly what your ruling means. The rules are clear, as I've said, and you've indicated that, yes, the rules are clear, that you're prepared to be of assistance, and you indicated that yesterday the government House leader attempted to resolve the—

The Speaker: Order, please. I recessed for 10 min-

utes, I went away and came back with the decision on your point of privilege. I'm not here to debate that point of privilege; the decision has been made, so there's no further point of privilege on that order.

The member for Waterloo North?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Mr Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 7.

The Speaker: Mrs Witmer moves second reading of Bill 7. Mrs Witmer?

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Point of order, Mr Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I have recognized the member for Waterloo North.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Mr Speaker, today I am moving second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic—

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: The member for Beaches-Woodbine on a point of order.

Ms Lankin: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to refer you to the point of order when two or more members rise at the same time under debate. I move that the member for Windsor-Riverside now be heard.

The Speaker: The motion just made is in order.

All those in favour of that motion?

All those opposed?

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; this will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1552 to 1622.

The Speaker: Members take their seats, please.

All those in favour of the motion will please stand and remain standing.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 28, the nays 64.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

I recognize the member for Waterloo North.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I am pleased today to speak to Bill 7, an act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity. This legislation is designed to bring about positive changes in our economy, create jobs and introduce democracy into the workplace.

In the two weeks since I introduced Bill 7, many, many individuals and employers across Ontario have telephoned and sent letters of support. Whether they are global giants or small and medium-sized firms, their message to us in this province is the same: They are ready and willing to invest in Ontario if we do proceed and restore balance to our labour relation laws. With that balance restored, a strong signal will go out to the global community that Ontario is once again open for business and jobs. We are prepared to do that. With the introduction of Bill 7 on October 4, we sent out that signal to the global community that Ontario is open for business.

In fact, almost immediately the Hudson's Bay Co announced that it would be adding 3,000 to 4,000 jobs in Ontario as a result of Bill 40's demise. The company will invest \$284 million over the next 12 months, providing employment at the same time to over 10,000 workers in the construction industry. These 10,000 construction workers will be employed in areas across our province. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

In the letters we have received, we have received many, many positive comments such as this, indications from investors, whether they be in Europe or the Far East, indicating they are prepared to come; letters and phone calls indicating that although there are some individuals who have bought property in the United States, now that we are repealing Bill 40 they will not find it necessary to move their operation there.

Last week I received a letter that I would just like to share with people today. It was from the owner of a medium-sized business in Renfrew. This is what he said:

"When Bill 40 was introduced, my desire to modernize and expand my business in Renfrew was killed...our plans to add a second shift and a new production line at the cost of \$1.4 million were stalled.

"However, now that your government is changing the investment climate in our province, we have commenced our studies to accomplish the expansion and modernization plans mentioned above.

"I can assure you that your approach is right on track with many, many small and medium-sized businesses."

This is just one example of employers who are now moving forward with their plans to expand their businesses and create new jobs for the employees in this province, jobs that we all know are desperately needed.

In my own area of Waterloo region, we have one employer who is expanding his operation, and he will be creating 100 additional factory jobs for the people in our area.

These are the type of positive responses that we have been hearing. We will see, in the next months and years, the creation of new jobs for the people in this province.

Under Bill 7, Ontario workers will have the same fundamental rights to organize and bargain collectively that they have enjoyed for half a century. There are many direct benefits to the workers. Not only will there be the job growth that I have indicated will result, but the fact that many of the amendments that we are bringing forward will bring greater democracy into the workplace.

Bill 7 is in step with what workers need today. What could make more sense than to allow the individual worker more democratic options in making one of the most important decisions of their working life, whether or not to be represented by a trade union?

I would now like to give some more details about the contents of Bill 7. Bill 7 proposes to make the whole process of certification and collective bargaining more responsive to individual workers. Under Bill 7, a secret ballot vote will be required for every certification application. Currently, there is no requirement that any vote take place if it can be demonstrated that more than 55% of workers in a workplace support the trade union.

The evidence of support that is presented is usually in the form of signed membership cards. However, we have discovered that between signing these cards and certification, there are some employees who may change their minds. We have also discovered that there are other employees who may not even be aware that an organizing drive is going on. Under Bill 40 these workers had no democratic way to make their wishes known.

1630

This will now change. The right to a secret ballot vote will be there for all employees in this province, a right that the workers in Alberta, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland already have. Our proposals will mean that someone who signs a union card and then has a change of mind will now be able to register that change in a secret ballot vote.

Having the backstop of a secret ballot vote allows us to remove many of the features of the current act which prompt litigation. This will result in a more streamlined, effective and cost-efficient certification process.

The Ontario Labour Relations Board will carry out these new certification votes within five business days after receiving the application of the union to represent a group of employees. This short, five-day timetable will limit the opportunity of employers and unions to intimidate or coerce workers, so it will result in a process that is fair to all parties.

The secret ballot vote will now become the most accurate and democratic way to determine the workers' wishes, and for the first time, all employees will be aware of the fact that there is a certification going to be taking place.

Similarly, we are—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The House will come to order.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Similarly, we are introducing a mandatory secret ballot to be held to authorize any strikes or ratify a contract. These votes are now, and will remain, union-supervised.

In many cases now strike votes are not held or they are held early on in the bargaining process when employees are not in the best position to make informed decisions.

These measures are in keeping with our desire to strengthen the role of the individual worker in the decision-making process and to enhance democracy in the workplace.

Bill 7 also rewords the purpose clause of the act. This is a statement which explains what the legislation is designed to accomplish. Bill 7 rewords the purpose clause to acknowledge the importance of economic growth as the foundation for harmonious labour relations. It also recognizes the need for flexibility and productivity in the workplace.

As I said, these proposals lay the groundwork for the balanced labour relations climate that we are trying to create. Bill 7 is the product of many months and years of consultation that goes back to when our party was in opposition. Both employers and organized labour partici-

pated in the exchange of information and ideas, and the result is the bill that now is before this House.

The government has made a number of changes to the pre-Bill 40 Labour Relations Act which will address the situation of workers who exercised new bargaining rights as a result of Bill 40, and, again, we are very, very pleased that we were able to respond to the suggestions that were put forward by the stakeholders during the consultation process during the summer.

For instance, Bill 7 provides protection against reprisals for any employee who exercised bargaining rights under the NDP labour law.

Among the transitional provisions contained in Bill 7 are amendments which now permit mixed units of security guards and non-guards. Under the proposed new rules, they can continue bargaining together when the employer and union agree and where there is no conflict of interest. We heard from the stakeholders, and we have moved forward on section 12.

Bargaining units of full-time and part-time employees combined under Bill 40 can stay combined. This will apply except when the employer or the union objects and the Ontario Labour Relations Board rules that it is no longer appropriate for them to bargain together.

Contract tendering provisions introduced in Bill 40 are replaced by provisions which will provide greater flexibility to employers in the building security, cleaning and foodservice business. These new measures will ensure that any employees retained by a new contractor will continue to accumulate vacation time and other entitlements earned with their previous employer.

But I should reiterate one point. With the exception of the proposals that I have talked about today—that is, the changes to the purpose clause and also the changes to introduce democracy into the workplace and also our proposal to deal with the communication and the provision of information to the workers before they make decisions—the pre-Bill 40 Labour Relations Act will remain almost unchanged from where it was prior to January 1, 1993.

Our amendments introduced move us forward. They move us forward in a way that we are responding to the needs of the modern workplace. For many years now, workers have asked for the opportunity for a secret ballot vote. We have provided them with that. We have strengthened the democratic rights of workers so that they will be free of coercion or intimidation from either unions or employers.

With these amendments, the Labour Relations Act will return to playing a constructive role in our economy. It will provide the balanced laws and regulations that will encourage management and labour to reach collective agreements, as well as resolve grievances and other workplace disputes. We all know that Ontario's labour relations have been a model of peace and stability for almost 50 years.

In addition to the proposals I have just outlined, Bill 7 also makes major changes to two other labour acts.

Bill 7 repeals, in its entirety, Bill 91, the NDP's Agricultural Labour Relations Act. The agricultural sector

was originally excluded from the Labour Relations Act, primarily because of the seasonal makeup of its workforce and perishable nature of its products.

Bill 7 also makes changes to the legislation overseeing the government's labour relations with its unionized employees to reflect the repeal of Bill 40 and to remove significant legal and financial restraints on the government's ability to restructure the Ontario Public Service.

My colleagues the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Chair of Management Board will provide statements on these issues in the near future.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Sell it to your friends so they don't have to pay the worker a decent wage. That's what that is all about.

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask the member from Hamilton Centre to withdraw from the chamber.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): What? On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Would you please take your seat. I will be naming the member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): With no warning? Come on.

Mr Hampton: No, no. Learn the rules: You warn and then you name. This is not a kangaroo court. You don't make up the rules as you go along, no matter how large your majority.

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): The Speaker has the right.

Mr Hampton: No, you don't.

Mr Pouliot: There is a protocol here.

Mr Hampton: There is a protocol. Half of you would never have been allowed in here with the stuff you used to pull. Where would Stockwell be? Where would Wilson have been? They never would have been allowed in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: I stand corrected. I stand in this House because I don't know all of the rules and like I'm asking everyone else to, I want to go by them as well. The member for Hamilton Centre will consider this a warning.

1640

Hon Mrs Witmer: Many employers inside and outside the province are indicating that this bill will improve the business climate in Ontario. They are saying they are ready to invest and to create badly needed jobs. I have also heard from individual workers who look forward to the increased democratic rights that they will soon enjoy, rights that will give them a much stronger voice in making important workplace decisions.

These comments indicate that our labour law reforms will bring about positive change for both workers and employers. It is time that we get Ontario's economy back on track and fulfil this province's potential to create jobs and generate prosperity.

That's why I urge all members of this House to grant this bill a speedy second reading.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions from the minister's speech?

Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford): I want to say that it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to rise and speak to the comments of my honourable colleague Mrs Elizabeth Witmer. I can tell you that Bill 7 is going to restore the balance between business and labour in this province.

What makes it especially pleasing to me is that it is consistent with our Common Sense Revolution commitment for jobs and prosperity for the working people of this province. It's funny, because every time we hear the members opposite talk about Bill 40 they talk about it as if it was the great revolution of their own to create jobs in this province. But the reality is that what Bill 40 did was drive jobs out of this province and deter investment from this province. That's what Bill 40 did and we're correcting that today.

I just want to add a brief comment, a letter here that I have from the Ontario Restaurant Association, a media release, actually. Let me just quote something that they say:

"This measure is welcome news to restaurant and foodservice operators, who can" look forward to "greater investment in this province and...stronger economic growth. The limitations imposed under" the NDP labour law "resulted in" great "uncertainty and had a tremendous negative impact on the hospitality industry...."

That is from the Ontario Restaurant Association, which we all know employs thousands of people in this province. I can tell you that this is a sign of things to come in the province of Ontario once Bill 7 is implemented.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I shall use my two minutes to comment on the minister's speech and at the appropriate time I'll go into greater detail.

The minister spoke briefly on second reading and we will be speaking as well, albeit for a much longer period of time. The minister was brief and we will be discussing a number of amendments that we will be proposing to the bill that we hope will address some of the minor changes that happen as a result of Bill 7 in committee, and hopefully the government will listen to those. We're getting representations to us from labour and business about minor amendments, minor reforms that I think are in everybody's best interest.

The minister was brief and I appreciate that. I won't take any more time on that topic now, except to say that I believe although you can be brief in this House, the response out there and the response of working people in this province will not allow what you're doing to just go away. We will be dealing with the consequences as a province and working people will be dealing with the consequences of this government's bill for many, many years to come.

So, Minister, at the appropriate time, I will address more detailed comments with respect to the bill and we will be bringing forward some amendments that we think the government will find acceptable, and probably would agree to, that will make the bill a better bill, in any event on small things.

Mr Christopherson: Three quick points: First, I would again urge the minister to agree to province-wide public hearings because the best response to the points

that she has made today will come from the communities that have benefited from Bill 40. That's the best opportunity for Ontarians to put forward the fact that the position of this government around Bill 40 that it killed jobs is not true. The history is there to be seen. In fact, that's why you don't want to go out in the province, because you know you'll be proven wrong and we would only hope, Minister, that you will ultimately agree that people have a right to have a say in a fundamental change to the way labour relations are conducted in this province.

Secondly, you have talked about consultations. Minister, there has been no consultation. You call what you did in opposition and talking to your friends during the summer when this Legislature wasn't even sitting consultation. It was not. Go and ask the labour leaders who did not have an opportunity of input, and now you're not even allowing the communities that are affected by this to have a say. You don't want anyone to have a say. You want to cut your deal with your friends and bring in your legislation that takes care of your pals.

Thirdly, Minister, I want to make the point that the thrust of your legislation is that it's going to create jobs and that it's going to make Ontario open for business. I agree with my colleague from the Liberal Party that we'll get a chance to get into this in some detail, but the reality is, you want to have Ontario compete and be competitive in the global economy by lowering the wages of workers, lowering health and safety standards, lowering environmental standards so that we can compete with Mexico and other Third World nations.

We did reject that as a government and we continue to reject it as a party. We need to compete where we have value added jobs, where we're benefiting from the infrastructure of our communities, where we're benefiting from our health system, from our education system, where we can compete globally as being the best, not offering up the worst of what competition does.

Minister, if you allow us to go out into the province and talk to the people of Ontario, I believe that point will be made.

1650

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): It's my pleasure to say a few words on Bill 7 and support the minister today.

With regard to Bill 40, it did kill jobs, it did chase businesses out of this province and it did increase the welfare rolls. Furthermore, people lost their own personal dignity. If that's what we call social conscience, I would call it immoral.

Avec le projet de loi 7, on va créer des positions dans l'économie en Ontario aujourd'hui, pas le droit aux unions plutôt.

Bill 7 will create jobs. It will restore the economy to a healthy status and to a healthy level. Union members in my own riding have told me they support Bill 7. To say that union members do not, that's incorrect. They do support Bill 7 because they will finally have the right to a democratic vote.

We said during the campaign that we would repeal Bill 40. We have lived up to that. We are repealing Bill 40.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would just like to express my appreciation to the critic in the Liberal Party, the member for Windsor-Walkerville, for his comments. Yes, we are already meeting with individuals who have indicated there are changes, both on the labour side and management side. We're prepared to make the changes to Bill 7, obviously to make it better and responsive in order that it does meet the needs of all of the stakeholders.

I look forward to his comments in order that we can have the best possible legislation for all of the stakeholders.

In response to the member for Hamilton Centre, I would simply indicate that the debate regarding the Labour Relations Act, as you well know, has been ongoing now since 1991. This is just now finally, we hope, coming to an end. We know, we have heard, there is going to be job creation. We have restored the balance in labour relations. In fact, your own newspaper in Hamilton has an editorial saying, "Restoring The Balance," a very positive editorial in support of the actions we have taken.

I appreciate the comments from the members within my own party as well for the support that they're giving on Bill 7. We look forward to soon seeing some very positive results in order that we can compete with countries throughout this world for new jobs. I hope we can do that quickly.

Hon Mr Sterling: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent, because of the expressions of the Speaker before, to call and pass the sixth order of business, to appoint the committees of this Legislature, if that is important to the members of the Legislature. I know the government side will give unanimous consent and I seek the unanimous consent of the other parties to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent to proceed?

Mr Hampton: No, we don't. This was not discussed with our House leader.

The Deputy Speaker: No, we do not have unanimous consent.

The Chair recognizes the member for Windsor-Walkerville.

Mr Duncan: I say, in beginning my remarks, that it is indeed good to be here in the bearpit of democracy to share my views and the views of my colleagues in the Liberal Party, the official opposition, with respect to Bill 7.

Over the course of the next while, I shall attempt to address as clearly and concisely as I can our party's position on this omnibus bill.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines): What is it?

Mr Duncan: Well, it's a well-thought-out and reasoned and rational position that responds, responds in what we think is a balanced and objective fashion, to an increasingly important issue. I say that the government can hold up its flyers all it wants, but they'll live with the consequences. They'll live with the consequences of this much longer than we shall.

1700

I intend to address as specifically as I can the points contained in the bill itself, and to do so in a manner that I think hopefully will point out the extremes on one side versus the extremes on the other and try to find balance and reason in a debate that has gone on, in our view, far too long and with very negative consequences for our entire economy.

I shall break my time up into five sections. I'm going to start and review the bill itself, the omnibus bill. I then want to talk for a little bit about labour relations and the economy in general. I then want to speak about the most recent history we've seen both in this House and in labour relations across the province. I want to then talk about what I see and what our party sees as the appropriate role for government in labour relations, and then finally I shall talk about the very specific positions that our party has advocated and will advocate here in this House, in committee and in our final votes.

We all know Bill 7 is an omnibus bill, and in our view it represents the repeal of significant progress for working people and it represents a deliberate attempt by the government to provoke organized labour. This is the first time in history that we've seen an actual rollback in the gains that have been made by working people over the years.

There is a certain irony, and we in this party particularly see the irony. The members opposite and the members in the third party may not be aware, but when the previous government introduced its bill, when the NDP government introduced its bill, it claimed that those amendments were designed to improve competitiveness. This government, on the opposite extreme, claims the same thing. We in our party reject both extremes. We in our party have a very different view of labour relations in this province and how they ought to be conducted.

The Bill 7 proposals cover a wide range of issues, the general themes of which the minister has reviewed today, and I should like to spend a few minutes on them.

First, the Labour Relations Act, including the repeal of Bill 40: Obviously, the government is saying that it advocates and supports the use of scabs in Ontario, an absolutely terrible, extreme position that thoughtful commentators and thoughtful jurisdictions anywhere cannot agree to. The government is saying in this bill that it wants to make it more difficult for the most vulnerable workers in this province to organize and enjoy the benefits that collective bargaining brings.

There are a number of changes, including successor rights, the consolidation of bargaining units and more restricted access to first contract arbitration, that are clearly designed to hurt working people in this province and make it more difficult for working people to share in the benefits of this province's economy.

The so-called workplace democracy changes attempt to solve a non-existent problem. I can't think of a union anywhere that would call a strike without the support of its membership. I can't think of that. I can't think of it.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): What's the point?

Mr Duncan: The member for London Centre, the

point of doing that is to kind of just kick sand in the face of labour. It's to say—

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): You're drifting left.

Mr Duncan: The Minister of Agriculture sits there and doesn't recognize, as those of us who have been members of unions and those of us who have worked in those plants realize, that the whole thrust of government's role in labour relations in this great province ought to be to find balance and harmony.

The government also, as part of the omnibus bill, has said that it desires to repeal Bill 91, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act. As we said in the campaign, we support the government on the repeal of Bill 91. We believe that when the bill was adopted, the individual needs, the specific needs, of the agricultural community were not addressed. They were attempted to be addressed in a fashion that you might address industrial workplaces, construction workplaces, and we think that was wrong. We support the government in its repeal of Bill 91.

Perhaps the one area I'd like to spend a little bit of time on is the amendments to the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, which are designed to enable an unprecedented privatization of government services. I want to address that in greater detail.

I want to start by saying first of all that the complete repeal of Bill 40, again, is an unnecessary provocation of labour. The government should be turning its attention not to creating conflict, but to creating cooperation. Growth, jobs, investment, productivity, only happen when we recognize that working people are a partner in that growth, that working people and organized working people are a partner in growth. They are not the enemy. They are not and ought not to be treated as though they're not partners. I will remind the members of the government that growth and real prosperity come from the productive application of human resource to capital. It takes the two: It takes capital; it takes labour.

The changes that the minister has proposed in Bill 7 go well beyond those that were contained in Bill 40. The Minister of Labour, in introducing Bill 7, said, and I quote, "Labour law reforms are designed to revitalize Ontario's economy, to create jobs and restore a muchneeded balance to labour-management relations in our province."

Far from creating harmony, the minister has provoked the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour into saying: "It's a misnomer to call this a labour bill. This is really an employers' bill, and it has but one purpose, to threaten the rights of working people in the province of Ontario. On the picket line, this is facilitating the return to violent situations."

The president of the Canadian automobile workers' union has said, "We are not going to accept a major setback for working people without a fight, and where we fight is in the workplace."

The government has been warned by labour that its regressive changes to labour relations will not go unan-

swered. Large progressive employers such as Chrysler corporation and McDonnell Douglas have urged your government to proceed slowly and with caution. They have been joined in this position by a number of smaller progressive companies.

The Ontario director of the United Steelworkers of America has said that, "These changes are not just about getting rid of one set of laws brought in by the previous NDP government; they are eradicating the basic principles and structure of labour relations as they have been practised in Ontario for decades."

Even the London Free Press, though it continues to support the repeal of Bill 40, says, and I quote: "The legislation will turn back workers' rights too far. Once a party becomes a government, it must govern for all the people, not just those who agree ideologically with the party's leanings.

"It is arrogant and wrong to ignore the needs of groups that may not share the same world view but whose hard-fought-for rights shouldn't be dismissed in so cavalier a manner."

Bill 7 will not restore balance. This legislation and the government's agenda will create a climate that will cause a reduction in investment, because you will be undermining productivity in our economy.

The Minister of Labour said, "We believe that the current Labour Relations Act is a barrier to jobs, growth and investment."

A prominent University of Toronto professor was quoted in the Toronto Star on October 7 as saying: "Anyone who says Bill 40 is a proven job killer is either a fool or a liar. So many things influence our economy that there is no evidence pointing specifically to that."

The Minister of Labour also said, "We will couple repeal with amendments aimed at increasing democracy in the workplace." This argument masks the reality of the so-called workplace democracy changes.

Prominent labour lawyers have been quoted as saying: "Workplace democracy is like family values. Who's opposed to that?" But does it mean employees on boards of directors or that they get votes on plant closures? No. It's just an ability to impede organizing under the guise of another name.

The changes to CECBA are far-reaching. The amendments proposed for CECBA expand the categories of employees to whom the act does not apply. These amendments are the first step in a massive privatization that could see a reduction in government revenues and certainly a decline in the services that all of us have come to expect not only from our provincial governments but from our municipal governments.

The minister and the government are pursuing a downsizing without bringing forward all of their plans. In the future, at the appropriate time, we in this party intend to explore just what the government's intentions are with respect to privatization.

We will also be interested in determining what process the government will put in place to privatize various government services. We suspect a Tory patronage bonus bonanza that will make Brian Mulroney and his cronies proud. We want to advise the government that we will be pursuing this issue closely and that we intend to ensure that bad public policy is not compounded with an orgy of Tory patronage.

Having reviewed very briefly the package of amendments, I would now like to turn my talk to labour relations and the economy in general.

Ontario's economy today is, at best, in a precarious position. Many factors will influence this position, and many factors influence where our economy is today.

One fact remains, that unemployment remains persistently high. In Windsor, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Hamilton and Niagara region, unemployment rates have never returned to pre-recession levels. Figures released late last week by the Finance ministry confirm that our economy fell into a recession in the second quarter of this year. Gross domestic product declined by a full 4.4% in real terms. Consumer spending is down. Personal disposable income is down. Exports, particularly in the automotive sector, are down. Corporate profits are down. Non-residential construction is down. Projections for the third quarter offer some hope, but overall we expect the economy to be sluggish.

1710

The Minister of Labour said that the changes included in Bill 7 will be "the impetus for major growth and greater job opportunities in the decades to come," because it will send out a strong signal that Ontario is open for business once again.

This is where we differ entirely from the government. This bill and the other policies it is pursuing are a recipe for recession. Simply put, there is no compelling evidence that suggests the economy has suffered as a result of Bill 40. To the contrary, with the exception of the last two quarters, investments, profits, exports are all up while days lost to strikes are down.

Indeed, the governing party had clearly formed its opinions before any concrete evidence had been accumulated. In short, the government's agenda is ideologically based.

We assert that in a society and an economy as diverse as ours, the rigidity associated with ideology will ultimately lead to economic disequilibrium and eventual recession. And what of this government's ideology? The government does not recognize organized labour or working people as a true partner in our economy. The government has a view of organized labour and workers that is rooted in the past, the long-distant past.

Unions are a positive force in our economy. The right to bargain collectively should be respected, not denied. Ontario has a highly skilled, highly motivated and highly productive workforce. Ontario's long-standing preeminence not only in the Canadian economy but in a world context is testimony to this. So I say to the government, if you truly, truly want to open Ontario up for business, then create a climate where labour harmony abounds and workers are seen as equals.

I need look no further than my own community of Windsor. Windsor's workforce is unionized. Our economy is industrial. Even our service workers, most notably Casino Windsor, are unionized. In our community we have fewer days lost to strikes and other job actions than any other major centre in the province. Why? Because collective bargaining has matured. Both sides respect the importance of the other. For the most part, theirs is mutual respect.

Since 1989 there has been more than \$5 billion of new investment in our community. Windsor has led the way. The member for Nickel Belt, the former Minister of Finance, will recall in his last pre-budget consultation a chart which indicated what new investments were going on in Ontario. The majority of those were in Windsor. Many of those investments occurred because union leadership in our city works with management to strike unique deals which allowed investment to happen.

The redevelopment of the Ford Essex engine plant required significant changes to the collective agreement Ford had with the CAW. Those agreements also reached out and included the construction industry in this province.

Chrysler's retooled mini-van plant, which is producing the new Dodge Caravan: \$1.6 billion; again, unique collective agreements agreed to by the unions in question.

Minor sports and a whole host of other community organizations have benefited from the working people in our community. The United Way in our community, for 25 years the highest per capita giving in the province of Ontario, relies on the support of organized labour.

None of this speaks to the gains in employment standards that would not have happened had it not been for organized labour. Decent wages, benefits, working conditions, health and safety have all been driven by organized labour. My mother and older friends of mine in our community have told me stories of working in wartime plants where the workers couldn't leave their post to go the bathroom because of production quotas. This province has evolved a set of labour laws and standards which have ensured that can't happen again.

What about the unorganized worker? What about domestics? What about the positive aspects of Bill 40? A majority of arbitrators responding to Bill 40 in a survey said the bill had a beneficial impact on the administration of labour law.

Bill 40 has brought a degree of labour peace that has benefited our economy. Complete repeal of the statute will cause labour instability the likes of which we have never seen. This will do untold damage to our economy.

I'd like to turn my attention now and address the NDP hypocrisy in labour relations.

Interjections.

Mr Pouliot: A point of order, Mr Speaker, to the protocol, the understanding, the threshold of the House for respect and good manners: When the member refers to my association with the New Democratic Party of Ontario as being hypocritical, I stand not only offended, vexed and hurt—certainly most uncalled for. Will you please, with your grace, Mr Speaker, do what needs to be done?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order. It's the type of language, of course, that does raise the ire

of people. Even though this term was not referring to an individual but to a party, it is totally in order. However, I would ask you: The English dictionary is full of good words; use these words.

Mr Duncan: I certainly wouldn't want to hurt their feelings. They've suffered enough this year, and that's why they're over on this side.

The New Democrats went too far too fast with Bill 40. They did not listen to management. If you want to argue that there has to be balance, you can't do so having spent the last four years ignoring the other partner in economic growth.

Bill 7 is the inevitable consequence of Bill 40 and Bill 91. The economic calamity that that government left this province in, the destruction of jobs and the way they treated the business community, has provoked a response. They did themselves and their supporters no favours.

Having done that with private sector relations, what did they do? They turned their attention to the public sector. They brought in the social contract and stripped collective agreements. They stripped collective agreements and betrayed their own friends.

And so we find ourselves today in need of the opportunity to address the appropriate role of government in labour relations. It is the view of our party that government's true role ought to be that of honest broker. The government ought to be an honest broker.

1720

There are three clear positions on this issue. There's the extreme of the one side, the extreme that says management ought not to be listened to or consulted or heard. Then there's the extreme of the other side, that would suggest that labour ought not to be listened to.

Ontario has developed a wonderful consensus model of labour relations in this province that served us well for many, many years. By rejecting that consensus model, the previous government set us on a course that would provide for a situation similar to BC, where every time you change government, you have a radical change in labour laws. That does not benefit anybody. That does not benefit the public interest, that does not cause job growth, that does not cause the growth in investment.

We suggest and believe that this Bill 7 is not a modification but rather a destruction of the Labour Relations Act. We urge the government to slow down. Don't deliberately provoke organized labour. Don't cause an increase in strikes. Don't cause a decline in productivity.

As I said earlier, those progressive employers in this province recognize this and have asked the government to hold hearings, to consult, proceed slowly. Do so. Try to restore the consensus model that was trampled on by the previous government. Try to get us back to a scenario where we can work out our problems with an act and a statute that serves the better interests of everyone in the province.

I say unequivocally that this is a difficult issue. The Labour Relations Act is not a statute which necessarily lends itself to easy consensus. It is a difficult statute on which to find consensus, and it takes time and patience and understanding to find that consensus.

We in our party will propose a number of amendments at committee that will try to undo the polarization that has been created by this bill and by Bill 40 and Bill 91. We will ask the government to separate out the Agricultural Labour Relations Act to deal with it separately. We will support the government's proposed repeal. We will recognize that the family farm is not comparable to an industrial workplace.

We believe that unions are already democratic organizations and that the so-called workplace democracy changes are an unnecessary and deliberate provocation of organized labour that goes well beyond the repeal of Bill 40. We reject the use of strikebreakers and accept the fundamental right of workers to organize and bargain collectively. Exceptions can only be made in the most extreme circumstances, and those circumstances must be very, very clearly defined.

We will ask the government to restore the 55% automatic certification. We will ask the government to stay with the 40% threshold for obtaining a representation vote that was introduced in Bill 40. We will propose further amendments to Bill 7 that are consistent with our party's position that was outlined during the election.

It strikes me as most unusual that the government is spending so much time so early on this particular issue. There's a lot happening in Ontario today that this Legislature could be addressing. We should be spending more time talking about the precarious state of our economy. We should be talking about ways of ensuring that the kind of investment and job growth we've seen up until the last two quarters continues. We should be engaged in a very long debate—instead of debating this, we should be talking about health care. We should be talking about the reconfiguration initiatives that are going on in Thunder Bay and Windsor and Ottawa and London and Hamilton and other places.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): Metro.

Mr Duncan: Metro particularly; very good point. The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale recognizes that his government is about to close seven hospitals in his community and cut services to Metro. We should be talking about that at length in this House. Labour relations is an important component of getting agreement on hospital reconfiguration.

In our community in 1992, we began our reconfiguration process, which required the cooperation and understanding of the local trade unions. There were nine different unions involved in the process, including our local district labour council. The public service employees union, OPSEU, just by way of example, participated in a cooperative fashion in those discussions. Why? Because their members are obviously affected. In any effort that is designed to reduce hospitals, it's going to affect workers. That is the kind of cooperation that the government, in my view, jeopardizes by proceeding in the fashion that it has with Bill 7.

The kind of cooperation we've witnessed on plant floors between the Steelworkers, the Auto Workers and their respective employers in the areas of health and safety improvements, training opportunities, that kind of cooperation, that kind of support from the local union leadership as well as the provincial and national leadership has allowed significant progress in defining the modern workplace and in defining good work standards for the working people of this province. All of that is threatened; it is threatened. Why?

I quoted earlier the president of the CAW. Their response to this bill is not going to be here in this House, it's going to be on the workplace floors. It's going to be at the Essex engine plant in Windsor. It's going to be in St Catharines. It's going to be in Oshawa. It will threaten to undermine the stability and labour harmony we have created in this province.

We have to view labour, again, as a partner. They have been a partner. They have worked tirelessly in communities throughout Ontario. Today we paid tribute to a great unionist from St Catharines. Why? Because of his role not only in ensuring, not only in providing better opportunities for the people he represents, but for allowing and for working in the greater community. We believe that this role ought to be respected.

We could be spending our time on hospital reconfigurations. We could be talking about inadequate cellular phone service in northern Ontario. We could be talking about that at greater length. We could be talking about the price of tuna. I've yet to find a can of tuna for 69 cents. Even if I could—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Duncan: If it's 69 cents, it wouldn't have been packaged by unionized workers, I can tell you that. That government, that's part of its mentality, you know: "Get me a cheap can of tuna. Have it produced by unorganized workers."

Mr Pouliot: A dented can of tuna.

Mr Duncan: A dented can of tuna, absolutely. Well, the working people of this province are productive workers.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. There's a period after his speech when you can ask questions, make comments, but don't do it whilst he's delivering the speech.

1730

Mr Duncan: That can of tuna wouldn't have been produced in an Ontario factory. Why? Because of our productive workforce, because of our advanced state of labour relations. And telephones—

Mr Pouliot: Cellular phones and tuna don't work where I work.

Mr Duncan: They don't work in the north, that's right.

We could be talking about significant issues, like the condition of winter roads in northern Ontario. We could be talking about those kinds of things. We could be talking about other issues that mean a lot, not just to a select, narrow community, but to everyone in this province. But why aren't we? Why? Because we have to proceed in an ideologically driven fashion that doesn't recognize rational debate, that doesn't accept the reality that's happened in Ontario workplaces since the introduction of Bill 40.

While we don't like the divisiveness of this debate, we accept it and we say that as a party we will work to help ensure that productivity returns to workplaces in Ontario, but we suspect it'll be a long time, given the situation that this government has created.

I'd like to address just for a moment the impact that Bill 7 has on job creation and job growth. The government has not talked about jobs even though by their own government documents they're saying we're in a recession. They've got a worse record than any government in years in terms of how many jobs are happening in this province. Their own documents say that we're on the precipice of further decline.

Yet we spend our time in this Legislature talking at length about how we're going to fix those union guys. What a shame, what an absolute shame, when we could be addressing in a meaningful way the unemployment levels that are being experienced right across the province, when we could address in a meaningful way health care, when we could address in a meaningful way what's happening to children in this province and to welfare recipients in this province.

Why aren't we? Why? Because, like everything else, the agenda is going after the most vulnerable. Bill 7 does the same thing. Bill 7 makes it more difficult for a vulnerable worker, a domestic worker, to get union representation. Bill 7 makes it more difficult for any number of people in the garment industry in unorganized shops to get union representation.

We're not addressing the problems that people in this province are talking about. For instance, we could spend the time we're spending on Bill 7 talking about how to make regulations get approved properly. We could spend our time talking about that. We could talk about that process.

We could spend our time talking about health care and the broken promises in health care, \$132 million of broken promises in health care.

We could talk about patronage. Instead of talking about Bill 7, we could talk about patronage. We could talk at length about all of Brian Mulroney's friends who are finding high-paying jobs with the government of Ontario. We could talk about that at length, and we would like to have the opportunity to talk about that.

What we say is this: The repeal of Bill 40 goes too far. It penalizes organized workers and it penalizes unorganized workers.

Interjection: It's taking labour back to the 1940s.

Mr Duncan: It's taking us back, and Gord Wilson himself said if you take the law back to the 1940s we'll take our tactics back to the 1940s—a regrettable situation that's been solely created by this government and its intransigence.

And CECBA: They're going to change CECBA. So what are we left with? We're going to see privatization, everything imaginable up for sale.

Interjection.

Mr Duncan: To whom? We don't know yet, but we'll be watching that very, very carefully, because it's obvious at this point that the privatization will benefit

their friends at the expense of service and revenues to the government of Ontario.

What about, again, to conclude, our economy and labour relations in our economy? Labour ought to be viewed as a partner in growth. We have an educated, skilled and productive workforce. In spite of all this, they persist. And we have stubbornly high unemployment, yet they refuse to address it. They'd rather address the narrow concerns of their constituency than the needs of people who need a job in this province.

Instead of penalizing working people, why don't we commit ourselves to a policy of full employment? Why don't we make that our agenda? Why not? We never have; we ought to.

This legislation, in tandem with what the government is doing in other areas, is a recipe for recession, and we will hold you accountable, as will the voters, when the recession that you have singlehandedly created happens in this province. Your own documents say it's under way already.

Government must again become the honest broker in labour relations. They must become the honest broker. They must become the centre. They must become the body that both labour and management can turn to and feel respect and feel that their views will be heard.

This government didn't do it. The previous government didn't do it. We urge the government to return to that. Return. Get away from the vision of the extreme. Get away from the blinders of ideology and focus on the needs of the people of this province, focus on their basic necessities and what we as a government and we as a Legislature can do to improve the lot of the people of this province. That's what the government should be doing, not following this kind of ideologically driven agenda.

In conclusion, I say to the government and I say to my friends in the third party and to the people of Ontario that we need to restore balance and harmony. We need a government that's committed to moderation and practical solutions that aren't generated or driven by ideology, but are driven by the needs of our constituents and the people of this province.

We look forward to debating this issue further and we look forward to making amendments to the bill that we think will improve the lot of working people and management right across Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Pouliot: Let me, of course, first congratulate the member for his most eloquent—if not always, in my opinion of course, apropos—comments. The members will soon learn that this is where you aim, this is where you focus, not at the members of the third party.

What we're seeing here really is a pilgrimage leading nowhere. It will pass and you will have your day, because you have people who come from all over the province. It's a sad day for workers, I will tell you that. There is no equilibrium. You will be seen as a caravan of misery that overreacted.

There is anti-strikebreaking legislation in the sister provinces of both British Columbia and Quebec. Where is the problem? May it not be an invitation to confrontation? But you have another agenda as well. You have succession rights. You dimmed the light on a certain night, Madam, with your colleagues, and you scared one another into believing that the workers coming by hordes were going to take over the province. This is a major step backwards, it's a sad day, and you will pay dearly.

I want to thank the minister for one thing. Our membership will grow by leaps and bounds. You could correct it. You could do what's right, because what is being done here is wrong. We invite you, and we can help you organize some public forum across the province so that not only labour people but everyone could have an equal say-so.

Come to Lake Nipigon and meet the miners. They want to see you, Madam. I might not be at the same meeting as you, I have so many other engagements, but I want to wish you well.

We will be calling for public hearings. 1740

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I want to respond to the remarks made by my friend from Windsor-Walkerville. It's quite interesting. I compare what I've just listened to in his speech with what I saw in the last provincial election campaign, I compare it to the debates in Hansard from the debate on Bill 40 and I compare it to my friend from Lac-Nipigon's party. Their position is very clear, our position is very clear, but the honourable member's isn't, and I wondered why.

I then looked for guidance in the publication that I normally do, to the Toronto Star for some guidance, in the Toronto Star dated Friday, September 8, 1995, and I thought this explained a little bit of it. I quote from that publication:

"'We've been far too fuzzy for far too long,' said Windsor-Walkerville MPP Dwight Duncan," the member for Windsor-Walkerville.

He goes on to say—and I don't know what this means; maybe my friend from Lac-Nipigon could help—"'We're going to have to some day decide what we stand for and then stand for it.'" Then he goes on to say—this is why I'll need my friend's help—"'We have some serious navel-gazing to do.'"

Interjection: What did he say?

Mr Baird: "Some serious navel-gazing to do." I wonder whether it would be not too much to ask, for those of us on the government side of the House, that they could go on that retrospective before the Legislature meets and discusses bills, because for too long the Liberal Party has had one speech it gives to business and one speech it gives to labour.

I do at least have respect for the positions of my friends opposite in the New Democratic Party, who have only one position.

We on our side of the House look forward with great interest to find out what the position in the end will be of the Liberal Party, given that those of us in the third party in the last Parliament joined with his party and his leader in voting against this legislation. It was good enough before the election; it was good enough on election day; we think it's good enough today.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I'm proud to stand today and comment on the speech just given by my colleague from Windsor-Walkerville. I've only been here since December 1993, and it isn't often, I think, and it isn't often enough, that we hear a speech in this place that tries to reach some kind of a consensus. My friend over there held up a number of documents about positions, and I think what we should do as government is try to reach some sort of consensus. And if we truly thought that the members across would listen, it would be easier for us all to give suggestions.

What happens when I go back home is I tell people quite frankly I think there are a lot of talented people in this place, a lot of talented men and women. I think one of them has spoken today and others will speak to this. The minister herself spoke to this. But I say I think there's too much time, too much energy and too much money wasted on some of the things that we may have been doing the last couple of days, rather than getting to the points that we should.

My friend mentioned this as well, that there are a number of other issues in this House that are vitally important to this province. He's addressed one of them. Health care is another. Education has hardly been mentioned. The economy and a plan for the economy hasn't been mentioned by the government yet—and he's holding up that famous book that had six printings because they changed their minds at least six times, and we only wish you would change your mind on this and listen to the sound of reason.

Mr Wildman: I just would like to comment briefly on the remarks by my friend from Windsor-Walkerville. I listened very carefully to his presentation, and I must say that I think he was quite sincere in his attempt to take what he believes to be a middle-ground position. I would say, though, that for all members of the House we should understand that this is a fundamental question. I know the members of the government believe it to be, and members in our caucus also believe it to be.

What concerns me about the presentations that we've heard in the House, and I think this was recognized by my friend from Windsor-Walkerville, is that there seems to be an underlying view within the Conservative government—I think it is held sincerely, although they are not being quite upfront about it—that there is something basically undemocratic about the trade union movement, and that because they believe there's something basically undemocratic, they need to bring in legislation which will somehow, in their view, make it democratic. I think that is at the essence of the dispute or disagreement between the two sides of the House. In fact, we believe that the labour movement is, at its very essence, a democratic movement.

I regret very much that we've had to resort to the tactics that were used by the Conservative Party when we introduced Bill 40 on the introduction of Bill 7 in order to try and get the government to agree to hearings outside of Toronto, across the province, so that we can hear from everyone—business, management, labour, unorganized workers, small business and so on—to deal with that basic question of how we ensure a democratic process in labour relations.

Mr Duncan: I would just wrap up by saying yes, to the member for Nepean, we do have to think about where we stand. We don't have our heads buried in the sand or wrapped up in ideology.

You talk about broken commitments. Earlier today I had the opportunity to address the House on only several, and I'll be taking an opportunity in the future, I'm sure, to talk about more, and ultimately we'll be accountable. For instance, on page 7 of the Common Sense Revolution: "We will not cut health care spending." To date, \$130 million in broken promises. Shame on you.

Again, page 8: "Funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed." To date, the clock's ticking, \$14 million cut. And another error: "Aid to seniors and disabled will not be cut," unless of course they depend on the government for Wheel-Trans, housing or just plain making ends meet.

No cuts to agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is no longer here. No cuts to agriculture is what they said in the campaign; so far, \$13 million worth of cuts to agriculture. What about the north? Today we heard the Minister of Transportation tell northerners to get a cell phone. Shame on all of you for suggesting that, on top of the \$22 million that you've already cut. Let's not make any mistake, there is going to be a lot more of those cuts.

Then, what about the final promise? I quote Mike Harris: "If I fail to deliver on my commitments as Premier, I will resign." I think rather he's resigned himself to the fact that as Premier he will fail to deliver on the commitments he's made, as this government will. I caution the member for Nepean, I caution my friend the minister that what you're doing today is going to cause you untold problems in the future. When those problems happen, we'll speak about them again.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr Christopherson: I want to begin with arguably the most important issue for us right now in terms of part of the process of that debate and that is to once again call on the government, in particular the Minister of Labour, to allow this massive bill—and it is indeed a massive bill, some 137 pages—to go out across the province and allow the people of Ontario an opportunity to comment on how they believe this law will affect their working lives.

There is very good reason for doing this now, and that is that we've had two years' experience under this law, so that communities and employers and employees and consumers and social planners and municipal planners all have had experience living under this law. The government has made what we consider to be very wild accusations, made before it was law, about what was going to happen to Ontario if Bill 40 was enacted. It did not happen, and we think the people of Ontario deserve the opportunity to say to the government directly and show it that not only did the disaster not occur but jobs were created.

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We had an era of unprecedented labour peace. I grant you that is not the entire reason why in 1994 we had a record level of investment, some \$8 billion in the manu-

facturing sector, which, I would mention, is also one of the most highly unionized sectors in our economy. But I would make the case that when the investors—the world investors, the major corporations and the smaller ones also, but certainly the major ones—are looking to make a commitment of hundreds of millions of dollars, particularly in the manufacturing area, one of the things they look at is labour relations and the stability that exists in the area that they are thinking of investing in.

Of course, they're looking in long-term cycles. They're not just looking next week, next month, next year; they're planning for many years. We believe it's fair to say that there were record levels of investment in the manufacturing sector in 1994, in part because of the unprecedented labour peace that existed.

I don't have a lot of time today because we only have a few more minutes and I'll be making the bulk of my comments of course tomorrow, but I do want to offer up that this government has not only attacked Bill 40 and the rights that workers have in there, but it's gone beyond that. They've gone beyond retracting Bill 40. In fact, the day that Bill 40 was passed I believe was the day then third-party leader Mike Harris rose in his place and tabled a very simple, one-page bill that would have the effect of retracting Bill 40.

That's a far cry from the 137 pages that were brought in here the week before last by this Minister of Labour. That's because this government has gone well beyond retracting the rights that workers had under Bill 40, but it's gone back decades.

We say to this government that the Bill Davises of this province would never introduce a bill like that. Not only would he not introduce it in terms of its content, but the process would never have been the way it has been here: the absolute lack of consultation, the absolute lack of consideration for everyone's input into this bill.

What we have here is very much a departure from the way that labour law has been developed and has evolved in the history of this province that has served us so well.

Hon Mrs Witmer: That's right, for 50 years, until 1990.

Mr Christopherson: It has served us so well. I hear the Minister of Labour heckling me from across the way. I am going to take the opportunity to ask if she can speak a little louder so I can hear her points, because I want to respond to every one of them.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): She might get thrown out.

Mr Christopherson: If we get the other Speaker in here, you might want to be careful whether or not you exercise your democratic rights. I say that from personal experience. However, I want to say on that that the honourable member came over afterwards and apologized to me personally and I thought it was a very sincere apology and I accepted it and I consider the matter closed.

The other thing I want to do in the few minutes I have is to point out to Ontarians that Bill 7 should not be taken alone. If you really want to understand what this government is all about in terms of how it is systemati-

cally taking away the rights of workers, take a look at all the decisions it's made in the short time it's been in power, and I ask any reasonable-minded person to ask themselves whether that equates with a government that has an agenda that gives a damn about workers.

You have shut down the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, which was a model of partnership and cooperation between employers and employees, but that doesn't fit your idea of the way the world ought to operate. Workers ought not to have that kind of input, that type of consideration—yes, I'm going to say it—that kind of workplace democracy. When it comes to real workplace democracy, you wouldn't know it if it came up and bit you.

That was a prime opportunity for us to show the world that we can compete in a way that no one else can. That's how we compete, not by slashing wages and slashing rights and slashing benefits and saying: "Come on in and abuse our workers more than you abuse someone else's. That's why you ought to come here and invest money." That's no way to build the province. That's certainly not the history of this province, and I dare say it's not the future; it ought not to be the future of this province.

You say you're not going to attack the disabled. You've already announced you're cutting benefits to workers injured on the job. Shame on you. You came in here and you said: "If you're hurt on the job you get less money now than you got before, because we've got to balance the budget. And guess what, injured workers? You lost. You're going to pay for it. We're going to balance the budget on your backs." You did that.

The Royal Commission on Workers' Compensation: Because there are a lot of problems there, there is a need to come up with formulas that will work, so there was a royal commission in place that would look at all the implications and come up with recommendations that would make sense. You killed it. You're not interested in innovative ideas. You're not interested in listening to what people have to say about how to deal with those problems. You went directly to your simple little Common Sense Revolution idea, and that is, "We'll just pay for it on the backs of workers and we don't want to hear any other ideas." So you killed that idea.

The wage protection program: The name of that program must have been enough to cause you to break out in hives. Historically in the province of Ontario, if a corporation went bankrupt, workers were at the bottom of the list in terms of creditors. Bankers came first, suppliers were up there, all the people who lined up and said, "You

owe us and we need a piece of this," and the workers were at the bottom. Historically, thousands of workers have lost wages they'd already worked to earn, and the severance they were entitled to, and their vacation pay. One of the first bills we introduced said that that's not right, that we ought to make sure the workers who've already put in their time and have accrued these benefits are entitled to them when they're facing the disaster of a plant closure or an office closure. That seems fair and reasonable.

You came into power and slashed away some of those benefits because, you said, "We can't afford those." That's fine if you're not the one on the other end, but when your plant or office is closing and you've got kids to feed and you've got a mortgage payment to make and you've got other bills and responsibilities, the very least you ought to be entitled to in the province of Ontario is that you will receive what you're owed. You ought to receive what you're owed. This government said, "That's not a priority for us: bottom line first, people second."

I'm going to close my comments by commenting on the Liberals. I don't want to waste a lot of my time, but there's something that needs to be said. With great respect for my new colleague the Liberal member for Windsor-Walkerville—

Interjection: Great speech.

Mr Christopherson: That was a great speech. I enjoyed it. He has a lot of ability.

We are united in conflict, if you will, on a number of fronts, but I have a little bit of difficulty with the fact that you now are part of a party—and I know you weren't here then—that voted against Bill 40. You're no friend of workers, and workers know that. You gave a speech that you could hive off into parts, one part to people who like Bill 40 and another part to people who don't like Bill 40, and people aren't fooled by that.

We'll accept the support as we fight this government on this draconian legislation, but don't think for a moment the people believe that the red book is anything but an agenda that goes after workers' rights too. You didn't stand up for workers in the election; you just said you might do a little less than the Tories did, but you were going after them none the less.

With that, I will close my comments and continue tomorrow at the appropriate time.

The Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1800.

ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
10	266	1	34	Bill 9, An Act respecting the rounding of the Penny in Cash Transactions.
11	274	1	53	WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 9

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3	Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des	Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
	40.		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 19 October 1995

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 19 octobre 1995



Speaker Président
Honourable Allan K. McLean L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 octobre 1995

The House met at 1331. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): It's become painfully obvious in the past several days that Transportation Minister Al Palladini flunked Ontario geography, so I am happy to rise in my place today to teach Minister Al this lesson: It's Northern Ontario 101. This is the Ontario I know. I hope this refresher course will help him understand that there is an Ontario north of Highway 7.

In the Ontario I know, we have no closed-circuit TV monitoring of roads. In fact, we have stretches of highway where you might not see another car for hours.

In the Ontario I know, we have no private tow trucks waiting at every turn to rescue stranded motorists. When you're stuck you wait until someone, seldom a tow-truck driver, finds you.

In the Ontario I know, we have an average of 178 centimetres of snowfall every year, and it stays until spring.

In my riding only one community, Kenora, has cellular phone capabilities, and even that ends 12 minutes outside of the town.

Minister, my point is that you just don't get it. Our Ontario stretches from Point Pelee to Fort Severn, from the Ottawa Valley to Minaki. Clearly, your Ontario does not extend beyond greater Toronto.

Most of Ontario doesn't have cellular capabilities. Most of Ontario doesn't have tow trucks at every turn. By cutting and slashing the services that you have talked about, you are leaving most of the area of this province completely without any coverage at all.

Minister, it's time you discover the Ontario I know.
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Recently, the Minister of Environment and Energy ordered a major review of the environmental regulatory system in Ontario. The minister has not told this House exactly what she means by such a statement. In fact, it's all been done in secret, behind closed doors.

This morning, the Canadian Environmental Law Association and others alerted the province to the Harris government's plan to dismantle hard-won environmental protection.

Sources claim that the minister plans to completely exempt solid waste management planning and disposal sites from approval through the environmental assessment process. This means that alternative sites and impacts of any given site would not have to be explored. It also means no guarantee of a full public hearing.

As well, the minister recently disbanded several environmental advisory committees, including the committee on the municipal-industrial strategy for abatement, the aim of which is to prevent toxins from entering our water supply. The job has not been completed yet on this.

The last election was about many issues, but I have yet to hear anyone, anywhere, at any time, suggest that what the people of Ontario said last June was that government should get out of the business of protecting the environment and their health.

Before the minister moves ahead with any changes to Ontario's environmental regulatory framework, she'd better come clean about her intentions and start consulting with the people of this province, who, I warn her and the Premier, are quickly wearying of this government's closed-door style of decision-making.

SHAVER HOSPITAL

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): The spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in the St Catharines-Brock riding. Today I wish to offer my congratulations to Shaver Hospital staff, patients and auxiliary. It opened its doors for the first time 85 years ago today, on October 19, 1909.

The Shaver Hospital is unique in many ways. It opened as a sanitarium and now is a chronic care and rehabilitation facility. As an organization it is unique because it has always been able to adjust and change with the long-term-care health needs of the times.

Also unique is the incredible dedication of the Shaver's volunteers and the fact that their beginning as an auxiliary actually dates back to its founding meeting 15 months before the hospital was officially opened.

The theme of community service, participation and dedication which was established in 1909 has continued for the entire 85 years the Shaver auxiliary has been working with community organizations, churches and individuals. They have raised money for building programs, renovations and equipment and supplies, such as donations of bed linen, towels, clothes and reading materials for patients.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member's time has expired.

Mr Froese: That's the kind of spirit—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

WINDSOR CASINO

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): As we pass through the 16th month of operation of Ontario's first casino, Casino Windsor, I want to let the House know how proud I am that it has shocked the world's gaming industry with its over 7.3 million customers, 85% of whom are Americans, and stunned the rest of us with

\$315 million in revenues, \$212 million of which are going directly to the Minister of Finance in the form of general revenues.

Windsorites were delighted when the now Premier made a commitment during the campaign that, if elected Premier, he would allow Windsor and any other city which plays host to keep 10% of net profits.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. I can't hear the member.

Mrs Pupatello: I look forward to bringing forward a resolution which will encourage the government to keep its promise. The wording of my resolution may seem familiar to the Premier. I've been doing some light reading and noticed in the committee Hansard of 1993 that during the casino debate, his Finance critic, now Finance minister, moved a motion to introduce similar amendments to the casino bill. I expect therefore not only to have his support but the support of the entire government caucus.

It's also my pleasure to inform the House that a team of community leaders has been brought together by the mayor to form a strategy group to help determine how best and most responsibly to spend Windsor's share of casino profits.

I hope the Premier has the opportunity to meet with the mayor and his strategic team.

FISHING ACCIDENT

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): It is with great sadness that I rise in the House today to join with my constituents in expressing condolences to the families and friends of those who died this past weekend in a tragic fishing accident in my riding. The community of Upsala has been hit severely by this terrible tragedy.

A group of 12 from the Upsala Bible Centre were fishing for whitefish when wind and waves came up suddenly and capsized their boats. Three people are dead and five are still missing. Land, water and air search is continuing, of course, for the five males still missing. Four are teenagers ranging in age from 14 to 19.

My thoughts and the thoughts of the House are with the families, and we offer our deepest sympathy and concern to all those affected by this tragic occurrence. 1340

CREDIT UNION DAY

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): It is my pleasure to inform the House that today is Credit Union Day in Ontario. As we heard in this House on Monday, this week is National Co-op Week, and each year the Thursday of co-op week is designated as Credit Union Day.

This was a particularly challenging and exciting year for the credit union system. On March 1, 1995, new legislation was proclaimed which enables these community-based financial institutions to continue to expand upon their tradition of consumer service and innovation and enables them to compete with other financial institutions on a level playing field.

Credit unions, unlike most business corporations, including banks and trust companies, are cooperatives.

That means they are established, operated, controlled and owned by their members.

Credit unions thrive due to the commitment of thousands of members who volunteer their time to serve on boards and committees. More than 3,000 Ontarians volunteer on boards of credit unions in this province.

Today, there are 500 credit unions in Ontario, with nearly two million members. These financial institutions employ more than 5,000 people and control assets in excess of \$12 billion.

In communities across Ontario today, credit union members and staff are celebrating their success and looking to the future. Please join me in extending best wishes and congratulations to members of the credit union system as they celebrate Credit Union Day.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS DAY

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I rise in the House to inform everyone that tomorrow, Friday, October 20, is Breast Cancer Awareness Day. I'm sad that neither the minister responsible for women's issues nor the Minister of Health has made statements regarding breast cancer during October. This is the ninth annual Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting Canadian women. One out of nine Canadian women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. Canada has the second-highest rate of breast cancer in the world. Breast cancer continues to kill about one third of its victims. It is the single biggest killer of Canadian women aged 35 to 54.

In 1990, the Liberal government began the breast cancer screening program to detect breast cancer in its earliest stages. This program has not yet been completed and, as a result, there are too many women who do not realize the importance of regular breast screening and do not have access to this lifesaving opportunity.

What is this government doing to ensure that all women are aware of this very important program and that all women are receiving appropriate breast screening and education? This government already has an abysmal record when it comes to protecting services for women. The silence of the ministers speaks volumes.

The government must ensure that women at risk of breast cancer have culturally sensitive early access to the services they desperately need. I'm concerned about inadequate funding for breast cancer research and the fact that treatments are not readily and equally available.

This Sunday, October 22, my family and I will be participating in the "Honda Run for the Cure"—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Time has expired.

Mrs Caplan: I would ask all members to sponsor me, as the Liberal caucus is, and if anyone would like to participate—

The Speaker: The member for Dovercourt has the floor.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Today I rise to introduce episode 4 in the continuing saga of the Mulroney-Harris affair. Today's star is Andrew Simms,

executive assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr Simms worked on the political staff of the Mulroney cabinet minister Tom Siddon at the time, and it gets better, that Mr Siddon was Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Mr Siddon, you will recall, was brought into the Mulroney cabinet to clean up after the tainted tuna scandal.

We can only surmise—and I'll leave to other minds the potential connection and advice that Mr Simms may have given to Mr Siddon versus the advice that he may have been giving to the current minister of Community and Social Services.

But it's sufficient for the time being to note that Mr Simms joins the list we've already presented in this House, to which no doubt we will have many other names to add, that so far includes the appointment of David Nash, prominent Mulroney Tory to the Ontario Casino Corp; John Toogood, another Mulroney Tory, appointed to the Minister of Citizenship's office; and Pauline Browes, a former Tory MP, appointed as vice-chair of the Environmental Assessment Board.

The saga continues. Stay tuned for more.

TANENBAUM DONATION

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): It's indeed a pleasure for me to inform the House of an act of extraordinary generosity which will benefit all Ontarians, and for that matter people around the world.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to attend the announcement of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum chair program in biomedical research at the faculty of medicine at the University of Toronto, funded by a donation of \$10 million.

The health science faculty at the university, in concert with its four affiliated teaching hospitals, is already recognized as one of the leading biomedical research facilities in North America, and this stunning gift from the Tanenbaum family will dramatically increase the ability of the university to attract even more of the best scientists from around the world.

In recent years, U of T appointed scientists have discovered genes and molecular defects responsible for Wilson's disease, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy and, most recently, the gene for early onset Alzheimer disease.

The \$10-million gift will permit the establishment of five joint chairs: in cognitive neuroscience; the chairs in molecular medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children and Mount Sinai Hospital; a chair in molecular neuroscience at the Toronto Hospital; and a fifth chair based at the U of T campus.

These programs will dramatically increase our understanding of the genetic causes of disease so that we can develop more accurate diagnostic tests, effective treatments and identify prevention techniques for cancer, heart disease, stroke and other major illnesses.

Through her gift, Mrs Tanenbaum has continued her family's long-standing reputation as exemplary patrons of the arts and medicine, and I know all members in this House join me in thanking her for this extremely generous gift to medical research in Ontario.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I'd like to inform the members that there is a guest in the Speaker's gallery today, the Honourable Doug Lewis, former Attorney General of Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS BREAST CANCER

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Minister of Health. As all of us know, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and as my colleague from Oriole has just noted, tomorrow in fact is Breast Cancer Awareness Day.

I want to bring to your attention, Minister, a very disturbing issue that affects women who are diagnosed with breast cancer, women who are hopeful about the future but still very much concerned about the kind of treatment that will be available to them.

GCSF is a drug that is used for patients who are receiving chemotherapy. Recently, and in fact before you were minister, your ministry established guidelines for prescribing GCSF for cancer patients who are on the drug benefit plan, and as you know that's seniors, disabled and people who are on welfare.

I learned yesterday that those guidelines which were set in place specifically exclude the ability to prescribe this drug for women who have breast cancer and are on the ODB plan. It's a fact, apparently, that in eight other provinces GCSF is available for women with breast cancer. So what we have is a situation in which, for example, patients who come across the river from Hull to have treatment in Ottawa are able to be prescribed with this particular drug; women who are from Ontario can't.

I ask, Minister, is it acceptable to you that breast cancer patients who are on the Ontario drug benefit plan can't get this treatment while women across the country can?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I appreciate the question and the seriousness of the question. I can inform the honourable member that I have taken no actions in terms of changing any regulations or rules or availability of products that might have been available for women with breast cancer since this government has come to office.

1350

Mrs McLeod: I'm aware of that, that these were guidelines, as I indicated, that were put in place before this minister came into office. In fact, I believe they were put in place in January. It is a fact that only came to my attention yesterday that breast cancer was specifically excluded, and I am concerned, obviously, about the exclusion. I'm also concerned—I find it difficult to understand—why that specific exclusion was made.

The guidelines are set out to say that the drug can be used and is effective for people who have curable cancers, and yet breast cancer is excluded from the list of cancers that can be treated with this drug. It implies that breast cancer is not a curable illness, and I find this particularly distressing, because surely everyone acknowledges that breast cancer is indeed a curable illness. It has a 74% survival rate after five years. Research has shown

that GCSF is a drug that will help more women survive with breast cancer, and yet women on the Ontario drug benefit plan cannot get the drug.

I truly believe that this is an unacceptable and disgraceful situation and that we cannot tolerate it. I ask you, Minister, if you will commit today to fixing the situation, to changing the guidelines so that they do recognize breast cancer as a curable disease and make this treatment available.

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member does raise some concern and something that concerns me. The previous government did leave in place a process, which we've tried to improve, so that women needing GCSF can, through their physicians, apply under our section 8 drug program to enable the people of Ontario, through the government of Ontario, to fund, because it is an expensive product.

I have in that area tried to expedite that process. I was highly critical of the delays, as the honourable member from Thunder Bay was, in the past. Our turnaround time now for requests such as this particular drug should be in the range of eight to 10 days. If I can improve on that, I say to the honourable member and to all members of the House, I will improve on that. However, through their physicians women can obtain assistance to obtain this drug through the section 8 process.

Mrs McLeod: With all respect to the minister, because I raise this as an issue that I am deeply concerned about and believe this minister must act to address immediately, this is not something which sympathy and the expression of concern is sufficient to address. It is something which can be changed, can be fixed by this minister without any delay at all. It is not the issue of the time it takes to get the approvals. Access to this drug is specifically excluded from section 8 approvals by the guidelines themselves. Physicians cannot apply for approval because it is not included for women who have breast cancer, and that's the situation I'm asking the minister to address.

I'm concerned that women are simply being denied access to this treatment. There is no question that people who are on the drug benefit plan cannot afford to purchase the drug on their own. The cost of taking the drug is approximately \$4,000 per person. Clearly, people who are being denied the drug through the drug benefit plan exclusion are not going to be able to get the treatment.

I consider this to be an enormous violation of a basic principle that I think we all believe in in this province, and that's that access to the best possible treatment should be available regardless of the ability to pay.

I don't believe that fixing the guideline would cost the government a lot of money. It's difficult to estimate, but some estimates have been put at less than \$2 million. Clearly, it could save some lives. I ask the minister again, on this very specific issue of the exclusion of women with breast cancer from access to this drug if they're on the benefit plan, to fix the situation, to commit to fixing it immediately so that we don't have long delays.

Hon Mr Wilson: I do appreciate the honourable member bringing this particular situation to my attention

and I will undertake to take an immediate look at it. It does disturb me if women are being denied access to treatment that's readily available in other parts of Canada. Ontario still is the richest province. We still spend more money per capita on health care than most other jurisdictions in Canada and we have the most generous drug plan of all the provinces in Canada.

I will endeavour to take the concerns of the honourable member and to report back to her, and more importantly perhaps in terms of the immediate needs of the women of this province, tomorrow the Premier and I will be in the company of people from the Ontario chapter of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and I'll take this matter up with them also.

Mrs McLeod: I truly hope I can take that as a commitment from the minister to act immediately.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I realize that there's a certain repetitiveness in the pattern here, but my second question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I want to return to the question that I raised yesterday about changes in a regulation which would have reduced benefits to the disabled, because I think it became readily apparent that the minister simply did not understand the question that I was raising yesterday. So I felt it was important today to spell it out as clearly as I possibly could.

Minister, I tell you today that we are indeed talking about two changes. The first change was in subsection (2) of the regulation. It was first raised by the news media. It is marked here in yellow marker. By changing the legal definition of the disabled, this change would have reduced benefits for 115,000 disabled people and their families.

The second change is to clause 41. It is marked here in blue. It was much harder to miss, and despite what you said yesterday, it does refer very specifically to the disabled, right in the print in the regulation. This changes the definition of "disabled," to reduce benefits for people who are permanently unemployable and require another person to provide them with daily physical assistance.

I hope that the minister has been made aware by his staff of this other error since the question was raised yesterday. I ask him again today, will he acknowledge that the changed definition of the disabled was in two separate places, not in one?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): Our government believes it's wrong for seniors and the disabled to be on the social assistance welfare system. That's why we're committed to establishing a new system, a separate income supplement that is sensitive to the needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

As I said in my statement to this House two days ago, "On August 29, staff of my ministry drafted a series of amendments to regulations regarding social service eligibility." This is what I said in my ministerial statement: "When these regulations were brought to me, I gave explicit instructions that any regulatory changes that affected the disabled be removed. Regrettably, my

instructions were not carried out and the incorrect regulations proceeded through the approval process."

I have corrected the mistake, and we've disclosed that. There's been no attempt to do anything else other than to correct what was done. I clearly indicated to my staff at the time that all references to any regulatory changes affecting the disabled be removed.

Mrs McLeod: I find it very difficult to understand how it is possible, since you did not seem aware yesterday that there was a second change in the regulation, that the errors—plural—could have been brought to your attention.

I think what has become abundantly clear is that the story that all of this is the result of some kind of drafting error in your ministry simply doesn't hold water. There were two changes. It had to be part of a plan, a deliberate plan, to change the definition of the disabled, despite the fact you told this House that no decision about changing that definition had been made. It had to have been done deliberately.

It was no mistake, Minister: two changes that end up in the same place. So I ask you the question again, will you tell us, did you give the order in the first place for the regulations to be changed, for those regulation changes to be brought forward, and if you did not, who gave the direction for those changes to be made in the first place?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The mistake was made in fact that somehow the reference to the disabled was there. I've clearly said before that I instructed that any changes affecting the disabled should not be there, because we had not decided at that point in time, at any time, in fact right now, that the "disabled" definition should be changed. To attempt to suggest there was more than one mistake—there was one mistake. The changes to correct that mistake were made.

Mrs McLeod: I raise the question yet again today because I believe that this minister and indeed this government owe the Legislature and the people of Ontario a very straight answer to what I consider to be an important question.

I know that these changes could not have been a mistake in the first place. My caucus knows these changes could not have been a mistake. I think the members opposite in the NDP caucus know that those changes could not have been a mistake. I suspect that people in the press gallery know that the changes could not have been a mistake. I suspect the people in your own caucus know that they could not have been a mistake. In fact I suspect people in the province of Ontario know these could not have been a mistake.

Minister, will you not just come clean, admit it was not a mistake and take some responsibility for the decisions you almost made?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Two days ago I admitted there was a mistake. I apologized to the House and I apologized to the people of Ontario for the mistake. I gave explicit instructions that any regulatory changes affecting the disabled be removed, and once again, regrettably, that was not done.

I think we're losing the real issue involved here, the fact that no cheques were ever affected for the disabled, no cheques were ever intended to be affected and no one from the disabled community has been affected by this at all adversely.

1400

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question, leader of the third party.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I want to ask the Minister of Community and Social Services about the statement, since he was reading from it.

I want to just suggest to him that there must be a missing paragraph in the statement, because the statement says, "I would like to fully disclose to the Legislature the chronology of events that led up to issues raised in the House yesterday." That's one paragraph.

The next paragraph starts, "On August 29, staff of my ministry drafted a series of amendments." The logical paragraph in between would say either: "I gave instructions to my staff on the basis of a cabinet discussion," "on the basis of a discussion with the Premier's office," "on the basis of some sort of discussion. I then asked my staff...." The staff wouldn't be producing amendments to regulations unless they were asked.

I'd like to ask the minister: Did he, prior to August 29, ask his staff to make changes to the regulations under the acts in question? Yes or no.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm sorry, I'm going to have to repeat my answer, but I clearly gave explicit instructions that any possible changes to the disabled should be removed and once again, regrettably, they were not. I've already apologized for this to the House. The mistake has been corrected, and in fact no one in the disabled community has been affected whatsoever.

Mr Rae: The minister didn't answer the question, because what he did was he read from the fourth paragraph, in which he describes what he did after August 29. He's saying that after August 29 people came to him and said, "Here are the regulations you asked for, Minister," or "Here are the regulations you asked us to draft." Then you said, according to this document, "I gave explicit instructions that any regulatory changes that affected the disabled be removed."

What I'm trying to find out, and I've been trying now for three successive days, is how it could possibly be that the ministry staff would've prepared such a range of regulatory changes, only some of which I would suggest we've seen—I would suspect there are many others which we have not yet seen—and how it would be that they would come to draft these regulations, unless you asked them to do so.

I'm therefore asking the minister again about the missing paragraph. What happened before August 29 that led your staff to draft these changes? What instructions did you give them that led them to make these changes?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: My answer to the leader of the third party's question will be no different than last time. However, I will take the opportunity right now to say the reason I gave the instructions to make sure that there were no changes to anything dealing with the disabled

community was because we're taking the time to examine what this all means. I think the disabled community is very important to us, and that's part of our commitment right now to ensure that they are not a part of the welfare system.

Mr Rae: This kind of stonewalling and this kind of patronizing of the disabled is not acceptable. I'm asking a very simple question, and I've asked it now for three days. The question has never been answered. He's never even given the courtesy of acknowledging the question. He runs away from the scrums, he runs away from everybody asking the questions. A simple question.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Rae: They can shout all they want on the other side. They can try to cover this thing up, but they can't. Prior to August 29, somebody must've given the ministry staff instructions to make changes. There were two changes, not one.

In his statement the minister only admitted to one. He then discovered there were two. I want to ask the minister one more time, who was it who gave instructions to his staff prior to August 29 to make changes to regulations on social assistance? Who gave those instructions?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm going to have to answer this in my own way. Obviously, the leader of the third party is not hearing my answer to this matter.

Once again, our government really is concerned about the disabled community, and frankly, that's why the instructions were given, to make sure that—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): If you told the truth, it would be too embarrassing.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Windsor-Riverside just said in this House, "If this minister told the truth," and I would ask you to rule on whether that is acceptable, for a member of this House to accuse a minister of not telling the truth.

The Speaker: I would say to the member that I didn't hear him say it, but if the honourable member did say it, he has the opportunity to withdraw.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, if I said anything that's inappropriate, I withdraw it. I should have said, "If the minister would come clean, he'd be embarrassed."

The Speaker: Order. New question, leader of the third party.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mr Bob Rae (York South): If the minister is not prepared to answer the questions on that subject we will come back to it, but I'd also like to turn to another one now.

A few days ago the government changed its mind with respect to the funding of a project in Hamilton called the First Step program. As the minister will know, there are a number of programs that are covered by the community youth supports programs, which programs have been cancelled by the government.

I'd like to ask the minister: If restoring the government funding for the First Step program in Hamilton makes

sense, why would it not also make sense to go back to all those other agencies which are carrying out precisely the same program, in one instance the Massey House, a Toronto maternity home which runs a young mothers' employment project which equips teen mothers with job search, interview and résumé preparation techniques? It's had a tremendous success record and this program has had to be cancelled. It's exactly the same program as the one in Hamilton. The only difference is, it wasn't visited by his Premier in the last few months and we don't have the record of it on video.

What I'd like to ask the minister is: If it makes sense to restore the funding to the First Step program—which the government did, because they were clearly embarrassed by having had their leader visit the place, say what a wonderful job it was doing and then turn around and cancel the funding—why would you be still cancelling the funding for exactly the same program, only this time it's in Toronto?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): The question really doesn't address the real problem here. The real problem is that this government has inherited quite an extraordinary debt and quite an extraordinary deficit that somehow we have to deal with.

In fact it's too bad that we're speaking about things that the government is not doing; we should be talking about things that the government is doing. We're continuing to support many, many agencies out there in the community, and in fact we're spending over \$2 billion on agencies and helping over 300,000 people.

Mr Rae: The government eliminated a program called the community youth supports programs. I'll tell him what happened; that's what happened. That's the first thing you did. Then you discovered that in so doing, you eliminated a project at a place in Hamilton which your leader had visited. Because that was on television, the member for Hamilton Centre, who is a very effective member, came forward and said, "Why are you cancelling this program?" Then a couple of days later you came into the House and said: "Ah, I have good news for the member. We're not cancelling that particular program."

Unfortunately what you did was, you undermined the faith that the people have across the province in your approach to managing this issue. You have programs which are in place right across Ontario. I mentioned one: Massey House. Last year they served 500 young women at a cost to the government of \$114,000, which is \$29 per person, a very successful project. The only trouble is, because it was in Toronto, Mike Harris didn't visit it. The Premier didn't visit it so he didn't get on video. We don't have a record of it.

1410

I want to go back to the minister and ask him one more time a very simple question. If it doesn't make sense to cancel a program in Hamilton which is exactly the same kind of project, why does it suddenly make sense to do it in Toronto and elsewhere in the province? Why wouldn't you recognize that you made a mistake in cancelling the community youth support program?

You've goofed again, another mistake, a deliberate mistake this time. Why wouldn't you recognize it rather than simply cherry-picking and giving benefits hither and thither?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I think that once again the leader of the third party is missing the point here. The point frankly is that it doesn't take much courage over a number of years to keep on writing blank cheques on the future of our children and in fact, that's what's happening.

To maintain the status quo doesn't do anything for the community or the province of Ontario and in fact, what it does is it increases the liability day by day. Quite frankly, we have sent the challenge out to the community. We believe that there are ways of doing more for less and being more efficient. We have to look back at exactly what caused the problem in the first place.

Mr Rae: Whenever I listen to the minister now I'm reminded of the statement that you can break a window with a hammer but the seagull still flies at dawn. If you say to me, you don't know what that means, I can say to the minister, I don't know what he means either. The project in Hamilton—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): He's got me flummoxed on that one.

Mr Rae: You wouldn't get it either. I know you wouldn't get it.

My question is not, "Do you agree?" My question is, it's a matter of trying at least to deal with what it is I'm asking you. A project is cancelled in Hamilton because it's part of the community youth support program. You cancelled the community youth support program. You change your mind because you get some negative publicity in Hamilton. But there are street kids, for example, now who are at the SOS centre run by the Anglican Houses in Toronto. It's an outreach program for kids who've been involved in drugs and prostitution; 50% of the youth say they were involved in prostitution before they were 16. The program has a significant success rate for getting troubled teenagers off the street and into jobs or education. It's a successful program. Ninety per cent of its funding has been cancelled because of what's taken place.

I want to ask the minister this question: If you're going to reinstate funding for something in Hamilton because you suddenly realize you've made a mistake, why wouldn't you realize that you've made a mistake across the board? You've made a mistake in Toronto, you've made a mistake in Hamilton, you've made a mistake in Guelph, you've made a mistake in Windsor. Everywhere you've cancelled this program, you've denied support for children and youth and getting them off the street. That's what you've done.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm actually quite surprised at the leader of the third party that he wasn't quoting at that point in time from Jabberwocky. However, I think we should look in terms of the merits of the program that in fact I support, and certainly the member for Hamilton Mountain supports, and that's the First Step program which enables single parents to get back to work. Clearly

that's part of our mandate, to try to get people back to employment. We want to get people to break the cycle of dependency.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): To the Minister of Transportation: Yesterday, I asked the minister to explain how he could justify the elimination of the emergency traffic patrol which is on the highways in the GTA and he referred to the fact that basically, these were unnecessary patrols because they were duplicating the private sector. He said they were unnecessary because people have cell phones. He said they were basically unnecessary for people's safety, so therefore he's putting these 10 trucks back into the maintenance yards.

The question I have for the minister is, does he realize that these emergency patrols also control accident scenes and help the OPP? They also remove debris from the highways, like flying tires or brake drums. Do you expect the private citizen or do you expect the tow-truck drivers to stop and remove debris from the highways? Will they stop and assist the OPP in containing a traffic scene? What is your answer to that, Minister?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I would like to assure my colleague that public and highway safety is not in jeopardy by removing emergency patrol units. We still have OPP officers out there and there are a lot of service vehicles that we still have on the highway from the ministry that can certainly duplicate some of the services such as cleaning the debris, as the honourable member referred to.

Mr Colle: With the cutbacks and with the short staffing that exists with the OPP, with the cutbacks also on the COMPASS camera systems—they're no longer operating 24 hours, they're now just going to operate 16 hours—I really wonder whether the minister realizes that this accumulation of cutbacks is going to affect the safety of people who are going to be stranded on the highway or aren't going to have the money to pay tow-truck drivers.

Are you basically saying leave it up to chance and leave it up to a good Samaritan or leave it up to a tow-truck driver to take over the responsibility that your ministry has for safety? What good is it having a cell phone when you're stranded on the highway? What good is it having a cell phone, Minister?

Hon Mr Palladini: This service is solely operated in the GTA. This is a service that's strictly in the Toronto area and it does duplicate other services that the government offers presently. I would like to inform the public, the people of Ontario, that we were spending \$900,000 to duplicate services that we already have. Where is the fiscal responsibility? How could we justify spending that money when the services that are in place are adequate?

TAX REDUCTIONS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): In the absence of the Premier, I'd like to direct my question to the chair of treasury board. Yesterday in this House, we and members of the public listening received a clear and unequivocal commitment from the Premier that no matter what happens to the revenue picture in the province of

Ontario, no matter how far below projections the real revenues that actually come to government end up being, the Harris government intends to proceed with a 30% income tax cut, 15% of that being achieved in year one.

I would like to ask the minister if he would confirm for us today if it is also your clear and unequivocal commitment that you will achieve the numbers in the CSR fiscal plan and bring in a budget that will achieve the CSR deficit projections as they are printed.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I think the Premier outlined the fiscal situation of the province of Ontario accurately yesterday. The Premier has indicated the concern that we expressed during and after the election that over the past five years taxes have increased by \$4 billion in the province of Ontario—by the previous government, \$4 billion.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Are you going to meet the target, yes or no?

Hon David Johnson: Yes, we were committed to rolling back that tax increase. The Premier yesterday reiterated the commitment of this government to follow through on the election promise. I think it's pretty clear to the people of the province of Ontario that we've already begun the process of reducing the expenditures of the province of Ontario. We've reduced \$1.9 billion. In our estimation, in the province of Ontario we have a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon David Johnson: We are committed to the promises that we have made in the Common Sense Revolution.

1420

Ms Lankin: I'm assuming what the member meant by his answer is that you're committed to those promises, that you're committed to meeting those deficit targets. Well, there's no magic here. There are revenues and there are expenditures, and the difference between the two is either a deficit or it's a surplus. So we don't have a lot to work with at any given time.

Interjections.

Ms Lankin: I'm glad the members appreciate the Economics 101 lesson, because I want to explore these numbers with you. In the Finance minister's July economic statement, he indicated that in fact revenues were \$1.4 billion lower than had been projected, primarily because of slower economic growth. This week, we hear that there is continued slower than expected economic growth, and that suggests probably a further \$1.5-billion reduction in revenue from the forecast. So that's out there.

I want to ask you today about two areas that you haven't talked about that are a threat to revenues and that are not included in any of those numbers. First of all, as you continue to see a loss in revenues, you've committed to the tax cut, the size and timing of the tax cut and to the deficit targets. That means you have to cut more expenditures. There will be a corresponding drag on economic growth as a result of that.

The Speaker: Put the question, please.

Ms Lankin: Every time economic growth goes down, there is a decline in revenues. Mr Speaker, just one other point and I'll move right to the question then.

The Speaker: Put the question.

Ms Lankin: Okay. Let me put it to you very simply, then. I would argue you have completely underestimated the cost of your tax cut: \$4.8 billion in the Common Sense Revolution; treasury says it's going to cost \$2 billion more than that.

The Speaker: Would the member put her question.

Ms Lankin: Will you confirm for me today, with all of the other commitments you've made, that in addition to the \$9-billion cuts we know about, you will now have to make \$2-billion to \$3-billion cuts more in public services next—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon David Johnson: I don't know if there was one question there or a number of questions or whatever, but clearly this government has laid its path: that we have a spending problem in the province of Ontario, not a revenue problem.

We have already begun on the process of a \$1.9-billion cut. This fall, the Minister of Finance will be coming forward with a statement which will speak to the relationship with the transfer partners, and we'll be seeing the amount of money that will be available to the transfer partners. That'll be a second step. Next spring, the Minister of Finance will issue the first full budget of the province of Ontario. We will see further reductions there.

In addition to that, we are working on plans to privatize and other cost-saving measures of the province of Ontario. I wish to assure the member opposite that there are a number of plans in place. This government intends to live up to its commitments.

CENTRE DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRE

M. Ed Doyle (Wentworth-Est): Ma question est dirigée au ministre responsable des Affaires francophones. Hier le premier ministre, M. Harris, a réaffirmé que la communauté franco-ontarienne va continuer d'être desservie dans sa langue. J'ai été bien content de l'entendre à nouveau.

Ma question est au sujet de ladite fermeture du Centre de santé communautaire de Hamilton-Wentworth-Niagara. Les francophones de ma circonscription veulent savoir si la réduction de l'enveloppe du counselling pour les adultes avait comme cible les francophones.

L'hon Noble A. Villeneuve (ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones): À mon collègue de Wentworth-Est, je le remercie pour la question, une question qui agitait plusieurs gens. Le retranchement des services de counselling n'était jamais orienté vers la fermeture des centres de santé communautaires dans la région de Hamilton et Niagara. Les compressions budgétaires avaient pour but de protéger les services primaires de santé offerts à la communauté. J'apprends aujourd'hui même que le Centre communautaire de Hamilton-Wentworth—Niagara reste ouvert pour continuer à desservir sa francophonie locale.

M. Doyle: Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse. Les francophones de ma région seront fiers d'entendre que le Centre de santé communautaire de Hamilton-Wentworth—Niagara trouve des moyens de se réorganiser pour continuer de desservir les francophones.

Ma question supplémentaire est celle-ci : La confusion y règne toujours. Les médias nous disent que les francophones ne seront plus desservis dans leur langue. Qu'est-ce qui arrive aux services en français en Ontario ?

L'hon M. Villeneuve: Ce gouvernement est engagé à continuer à desservir sa francophonie comme toujours, d'après la Loi 8, telle qu'originellement inaugurée ici dans cette rassemblée. Nous allons continuer les services sociaux dans les districts de Cochrane — et mon ami va certainement être d'accord — la région d'Ottawa-Carleton, la région de Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry et un peu partout à travers la province de l'Ontario où les régions sont désignées.

Nous continuons à desservir notre minorité francophone en Ontario.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. On October 3, the minister said that he had a sample budget that indicated how a single person or a single parent with a child could survive after his 21.6% welfare cuts. I quote from Hansard: "I have it here in this binder. I'd be willing to share this with the leader of the third party."

We certainly, first of all, hope that the budget includes the cost of a cell phone in case the individuals' cars break down.

Since that time, my leader, members of our caucus and third-party members have continuously asked the minister for the sample budget to show the people of Ontario how they can survive on these cuts. Today, on October 19, over two weeks later, Minister, this is no longer an issue of the budget; it has become a question of credibility and a question of your credibility as a minister. This budget has not been released.

I ask you, Minister, did you have the budget with you on October 3, and, if that budget exists, can you please send it over to the opposition now?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): Actually, if I recall, the commitment was made to the leader of the third party. Earlier in the week I spoke to the member for Windsor-Riverside. We discussed the matter. We had agreed that before the end of the week I will deliver the sample budget over to him. I will provide the same courtesy to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Agostino: Again, the answer of the minister is not good enough. The answer of the minister is not credible. How can you have us sit in this House and believe that for a budget that 16 days ago you had in your binder, you have not had the courtesy yet to send it across the floor to either the leader of the third party or the Leader of the Opposition? Does it take 16 days to photocopy a sample budget and send it across the floor?

Mr Minister, it has become a question of credibility. It has become a question of your credibility. You do not

realize that this ongoing comedy of errors on your part is not only damaging your ministry—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question. Mr Agostino: —not only damaging your credibility; it is damaging the ministry from one end of the province to another.

I ask you again, Mr Minister, if the budget is there and if the budget is in front of you, why will you not send it across the floor right now, this moment, and start the process to restore whatever credibility you might have left as minister?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The commitment was made to the leader of the third party. We had made arrangements earlier on in the week to provide the sample budget through the member for Windsor-Riverside. I said as a courtesy we would give one, although no commitment was made, to the Leader of the Opposition.

Without question, there are concerns about people meeting their daily needs on a restricted budget, and whether it be people on welfare or the working poor of this province, I realize that meeting these challenges is not going to be easy.

What I've asked my ministry to do, in addition, is to seek advice from an independent third party to provide a tool for the front-line troops. This action is intended to assist them assist families who are living on restricted budgets. This will provide individuals seeking budgetary information. This plan can be used by front-line personnel to really assist families, whether they are on welfare or are the working poor.

I indicated earlier on that I would provide a copy to the member for Windsor-Riverside before the end of the week. He seemed to be satisfied with that earlier in the week.

1430

ONTARIO HYDRO

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a question for the Minister of Environment and Energy. Madam Minister, in light of speculation about the imminent replacement of Maurice Strong by Bill Farlinger—by the way, a well-known proponent of privatization and, incidentally, a long-term fund-raiser and chair of the Harris government transition team—as chair of Ontario Hydro, and in light of the comments made by the president of Hydro yesterday in Calgary, can the minister inform the House whether the government intends to privatize Hydro?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): I thank the member for the question. In the Common Sense Revolution, we committed, first of all, to a five-year rate freeze for Ontario Hydro, and also to consider restructuring for Ontario Hydro. At this point in time, the government is undertaking a review about what and how to go about looking at restructuring of Ontario Hydro.

Ms Churley: I believe the answer to the question was yes. In light of the comments made by the president, and let me quote—"hopes to achieve 'complete unbundling' of its facilities and services by January 1, 2001. He said that this would allow Ontario Hydro later to sell off certain

assets or to form equity partnerships with private investors" etc—it seems the two people who are being appointed to the most prominent positions certainly have their agenda set out.

I would like to know who else the minister is consulting with and talking to about the future of Hydro. Is she doing as she is in other matters of the environment and only consulting with a certain sector, or is she also consulting with other people who have different ideas and other ideas of where Hydro should be going? Can she be more specific about her views of where Hydro should go?

Hon Mrs Elliott: There are two matters that need to be considered in any matter of restructuring Ontario Hydro. The first is competitive rates. That's very important to Ontario's economy. The second is the stable delivery of electricity across this province.

Since I entered the Ministry of Environment and Energy, we have received a number of submissions and have met with a great number of stakeholders already. At this point in time, we are considering how to go forward. We will be doing that carefully, with a great deal of thought, and we will be looking to ensure the safe and best delivery of hydro to all the customers in Ontario.

EDUCATION

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. I would like to congratulate the member for Beaches-Woodbine for using the word "surplus" today. I don't think the people of Ontario thought it was in the vocabulary of the third party.

Mr Speaker, as the members opposite do, I digress.

Many students in my riding tell me their worries about not being able to find a good job after graduation. They are concerned because they have difficulty seeing a connection between the skills they are being taught in school and those required by employers in today's economy. Has the minister taken any steps to ensure the establishment of linkages between the education system and today's working world?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question. The honourable member can be assured that the Ministry of Education and Training is doing everything it can to encourage partnerships between educators and the broader community, including the business community.

The colleges and universities of the province of Ontario have established deep and long relationships with the business community, and in addition to those relationships, over 60,000 students in the province of Ontario are actively engaged in cooperative programs between high schools and businesses in their communities.

There are other well-known partnerships in the education sector, including several in the Wentworth area and several in the Windsor area.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Snobelen: Yes. This week, I attended a conference in the Hamilton-Wentworth area where industry and education people came together to talk about partnerships; in fact, over 500 people were in attendance at that conference.

Mr Maves: I thank the minister for his answer. What has the minister done to ensure that younger students also become familiar with skills required in the workforce?

Hon Mr Snobelen: We believe it's never too early for children to become aware of the world in which their parents work. In fact, there are several programs geared towards younger children in the province of Ontario, including a program designed for young people initiated by the Learning Partnership, called the Take Our Kids to Work Day. I'm pleased to report that as a result of this program last year, over 150,000 grade 9 students in the province of Ontario attended a place of work of their parents.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Windsor-Sandwich is out of order.

The member for Oriole, with a new question.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, do you believe that the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses has a valid concern regarding your cuts

to second-stage housing for victims of family violence?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'd like to address this by saying first of all that we're still providing over \$60 million for shelters for women. We have provided programming in women's shelters, in the first-stage shelters, and certainly through the Ministry of Housing we still continue all the residential components of second-stage housing. To us, it certainly is important to address the matter of shelters for women.

Mrs Caplan: Minister, I'm going to take that bit of jabberwocky as a yes, you think they have a valid concern. I agree that they have a valid concern.

This morning they met with your colleague the minister responsible for women's issues to discuss these issues and they asked if she would assist in setting up a meeting with you, notwithstanding the fact that in the House, when speaking about second-stage housing projects, your colleague said she would be happy to meet with representatives concerned about second-stage housing. She also said, "I'm certain my colleague involved would be as well."

I have a question for you today that you can answer with a simple yes. Since your colleague says she's unable to arrange for that meeting and has refused to help the group, would you commit today in the House to meet with the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses to discuss this serious issue of the cuts to second-stage housing? A simple yes, as opposed to more jabberwocky from you, Minister.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Yes. 1440

MINING PROGRAMS

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, recently the government announced plans to close the minerals incentive office in Sudbury, and a number of programs have been cut as a result of this action. To name two: the Ontario prospectors assistance program, which provides assistance to individual prospectors to seek out new mines, and the Ontario mineral incentive program, which provides grants to companies and individuals for grass-roots mineral exploration.

The mining industry has created many jobs in the north and any cuts to such programs would be detrimental to the economic development of the north as a whole. Can the minister confirm that these programs are to be cut and advise what other mining programs you plan to cut?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines): I want to assure the member and all the members of the Legislature that mining is a very important sector of our economy in Ontario. It generates a lot of wealth, and the member knows from his home riding that it's very important.

He also realizes that these are difficult times in terms of the fiscal realities of Ontario and there have to be cuts made. As has been pointed out by the leader of your party, there's a consensus that government has to reduce its spending. What we're trying to do is prioritize where these cuts are made.

This is very important. I want to assure the member that I recognize the need for these incentive programs he talked about, but we're looking at ways they can maybe be delivered differently or better, and those programs are all under review. I can tell him that we made our targets as part of the July statement by the Treasurer of Ontario. They were announced and rolled out last week.

It's not an easy time for the employees who have worked hard on behalf of the province of Ontario, but I can tell you that it's necessary and we're looking at innovative ways to provide services in the future to help the mining sector in all northern Ontario.

Mr Len Wood: Some 80% of all new mines for exploration in Canada are discovered by the single prospector or junior mining companies that do not own mines.

I might point out that over 240 of them were out there last year that depended on some type of assistance from the government to put food on the table. I'm sure you've received a copy of the same four-page letter I received, the concern that these people are being thrown out of work as a result of what you're doing. I might point out that the Voisey Bay, Newfoundland, mine was found by an individual prospector.

What does the government have in the future for helping out these prospectors and junior companies in locating mines and finding work over the next year or so?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I want to assure the member that this is under review. I recognize the importance of this program. What we want to point out as well, of importance to his riding and to all the north and to all of Ontario, is that this government is committed to a number of initiatives that will help the mining sector as a whole: WCB reform, the freeze in Ontario Hydro rates for five years, cutting red tape, finding better ways to deliver on programs—these are all things this government can reform that will help the mining sector.

What your question refers to is the prospectors. I'm aware of and thank him for his input, and I'm reviewing it. As soon as we've made up our mind I'll let him know. I appreciate his question.

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. Minister, as you're aware, the agricultural members of my riding are plainly interested in environmental issues. Your colleague the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the member for S-D-G & East Grenville, has spoken many times in this House on the matters of importance to the agricultural community. Having grown up on a farm, I know that you too are well aware of the farming life, and I would be obliged if you would tell this House what your ministry is doing to help the farmers of this province.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I'm from London, Ontario. He's from Quebec. Where are you from?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'd like to thank my colleague the member for Huron for the question. She's quite right. I was brought up on a dairy farm—quite proud of it. It happened to be in the county of Huron—also quite proud of that.

This government is working with the federal government on a classification system that will streamline the availability of pesticides within Ontario. One of my ministry officials sits on the federal-provincial-territorial committee to harmonize pesticide classifications. Modern farmers, who now face global challenges and global competition, are concerned about the availability and competitiveness of pesticides because those are some of the tools they need for food production.

This government is committed to not putting up obstacles to farmers who need a level playing field. We are working with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Wrap up your answer.

Hon Mrs Elliott: —and with the farming community to improve and ensure safe handling and disposal practices.

I would like to assure my colleague and members of the government that my ministry and I appreciate the farmers of Ontario, and we are very conscious of their environmental concerns and the impacts of those environmental concerns on farming practices.

Mrs Johns: As the minister is aware, the round table task force on agriculture and food produced a report with a set of recommendations, some of which were of concern to farmers. Can the minister tell the House, what is the status of the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I would like to assure the member that this government recognizes, as I've said before, that farmers are good stewards of the land in Ontario. Their commitment to the environment cannot be questioned.

The Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy has fostered dialogue and bridged differences among many interest groups throughout this province towards the

goal of sustainable development. We have sincerely appreciated the work they have done for us in the past, but in recent weeks, in light of fiscal restraint, we have reviewed the future of the round table and decided that, as part of its sunsetting clause, its work should be completed.

I am pleased to report that we have had encouraging discussions with York University about investing in the school the round table's—

The Speaker: Wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mrs Elliott: —valuable collection of books and materials and—

The Speaker: Would the minister take her seat, please. New Question, the member for Essex-Kent.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): There was a story in the Chatham Daily News last week which illustrates the bureaucracy run amok.

Two of my constituents, Starla and Randy Wilkinson, may lose their house because of an Environment ministry regulatory bind. They got approval from the septic system inspector and the building inspector to renovate their property.

Halfway through the renovation, the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority advised that new ministry enforcement of old regulation 358/90 since April 1, 1995, requires them to install a \$25,000 septic system, which they cannot afford.

The bank won't lend them any more money, and they probably can't sell the house because the ministry will fine the property \$300 per day. The house may even have to be abandoned.

My question to the Minister of Environment is, what are you going to do to assist my constituents to ensure that they do not lose their home?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): I thank the member for the question. As we discussed yesterday, my ministry is aware of the concerns of the residents in this area. I have, as I notified the member, asked my ministry to relook at this situation, and we will inform him shortly of our decision.

PETITIONS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Housing has cancelled almost 400 non-profit housing projects; and

"Whereas tenants expecting to live in those developments have been given no other housing alternatives; and

"Whereas the waiting list for affordable housing is growing each day; and

"Whereas the cancelled housing projects would have provided the disabled and the elderly with affordable housing;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Minister of Housing to reconsider these drastic cuts to affordable housing in Ontario, and to develop a housing plan that reflects the needs of tenants."

I affix my signature to this very able petition.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Cochrane South has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1451 to 1521.

The Speaker: Will the members take their seats, please.

All those in favour of Mr Bisson's motion will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 28, the nays 59.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Petitions? The member for Dufferin-Peel.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I had a petition to read with respect to Bill 7, but instead I now move that we proceed to orders of the day.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Point of order.

The Speaker: Well, the motion has been put and the motion is in order.

Mr Cooke: I don't believe the motion is in order.

The Speaker: The motion is in order.

Mr Cooke: May I speak to it?

The Speaker: No.

All those in favour of the motion?

All those opposed to the motion?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1524 to 1554.

The Speaker: Mr Tilson has moved that we proceed to orders of the day.

All those in favour of Mr Tilson's motion will please rise.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 53; the nays 23.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LABOUR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL ET L'EMPLOI

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations / Projet de loi 7, Loi visant à

rétablir l'équilibre et la stabilité dans les relations de travail et à promouvoir la prospérité économique et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois en ce qui concerne les relations de travail.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Mr Speaker, there was an agreement between the House leaders that the order of speakers would be 60 minutes on the government side, 60 minutes on the opposition side and then to return to the member for Hamilton Centre for the remainder of his hour and 18 minutes.

That was the agreement between House leaders that would be the order of speakers. So the member for Nepean is our next speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I recognize the member for Nepean.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 7—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I'd like to rise on a point of order with respect to section 106 of the rules with respect to setting up the standing committees of the Legislature. I repeat, as I said yesterday, that the standing order states, and I quote:

"Within the first 10 sessional days following the commencement of each session in a Parliament the membership of the following standing committees shall"—and I emphasize again the word "shall"—"be appointed for the duration of the session."

Yesterday, Mr Speaker, you gave a ruling that yesterday was not the appropriate day, but I think you gave a very clear ruling that you were not going to tolerate a very long period of time, for which the rules were not set up.

We have had discussions about the establishment of the standing committees. I would like to say that the position the government has taken or the acting government House leader has taken, that in fact the motion can be dealt with but that it's going to be dealt with in a way that will all be done by consent and there will not be any debate, is unacceptable.

I want to again refer to the standing orders, which say that this is a substantive motion. In fact, in the section of the rules that refers to the definition of a substantive motion, the establishment of the standing committees is specifically referred to.

A substantive motion, as you know, Mr Speaker, is one which is debatable, and I don't think the government House leader or anyone else should take the position, "We're not going to call the motion because the motion is going to be debated." That's the position the government is taking.

We're now well past the 10 days that the rules state. We cannot deal with appointments. There are over 300 appointments that this government has made since it has been sworn in. We cannot call any of those appointments before the standing committee.

When and if the estimates are ever tabled—I suspect the estimates were not tabled today, again because this motion has not been introduced to establish the committees. You cannot bring the estimates to the House, which are deemed to be reported to a standing committee, when the standing committees have not been established, so we don't get the estimates.

There's another very important item that we've all agreed, and you have stated in the House, will be referred to a standing committee, the security in this place. That is a very essential item for us to deal with.

None of those items can be dealt with because the government refuses to call the motion to set up the committees, as it's obliged to under the rules—not optional; it's obliged to. It says "shall." They won't call that motion.

Mr Speaker, I ask you, the guardian of the standing orders and the protector of both majority and minority rights in this place, to take the appropriate steps and call the motion to establish the committees so we can debate that motion appropriately in the House.

1600

The Speaker: The member for Carleton on the same point of order.

Hon Mr Sterling: If this wasn't such an important matter, I wouldn't be objecting to it as much as I am, but what appears to be happening here in this House is that the third party, notwithstanding what the electorate of Ontario said to this party, wants to govern this province in this Legislature.

Mr Speaker, you know that on Tuesday, in order to live within the standing rules and the spirit of the standing rules, we called this particular order. We had some debate on it, and it was obvious that the third party was prolonging the debate and stalling.

I think the nature of the motion is this: Each party is asked to put forward the names of people they want sitting on the various committees of this Legislature. Our party put forward its names, the opposition party put forward its names and the New Democratic Party put forward its names—at a very, very late date, even though we had asked for them weeks ago. Therefore, each party put forward the names.

I have been in this Legislature for 18 years and I have not had a debate on this particular matter before, because it is thought to be a matter on which everybody seeks consensus as to whom each party wants on each committee, and therefore, while the House leader for the third party would characterize this as a substantive motion, what it has been treated as in practice is a routine motion almost.

I want to say to you that after we have debate this afternoon for a while on Bill 7, I would be pleased to adjourn the debate and go to this particular motion, if that is in your interest, and I offer that as a solution to the problem.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker—

The Speaker: Order. Yesterday I ruled on this very issue. I indicated that the House leaders should get together and come to a conclusion on this matter. I don't think further discussion with regard to those rules today is serving any useful purpose, but I would think that the

House leaders should get together and come to a consensus with regard to that very issue.

Orders of the day. The member for Nepean.

Mr Baird: Balance and stability in labour relations and economic prosperity is the real priority of this government.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, on a point of order.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Windsor-Riverside. Is it the same point of order?

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, I'd just like—

The Speaker: Is it the same point of order?

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, you have different rules today than you had yesterday.

The Speaker: If it is, I have ruled on it.

Mr Cooke: Your ruling today is different than it was yesterday. It is, Mr Speaker. Yesterday you said there was a time at which you would step in.

The Speaker: Order. I ruled on it yesterday. I think my ruling was proper and I will abide by the same ruling today. Any further discussion on this issue is redundant at this time.

I recognize the member for Nepean.

Mr Baird: These reforms fulfil a key promise made by our party and our leader, Mike Harris, in the recent provincial election.

My colleagues and I believe that Bill 40 upset the delicate balance in labour relations in this province. It killed jobs, drove away investment and shackled industry, enterprise and small business in the province of Ontario.

Our reforms to the Labour Relations Act represent, in our view, the culmination of four years of broad public consultation and broad public debate on this issue.

Back in 1991 when Labour Minister Bob Mackenzie appointed the labour law reform committee, with representatives from both business and labour, he gave it 30 days to consider 30 potential changes. But they couldn't agree on these proposed changes.

The business representatives from the committee said that there was no demonstrable need for them. In their own words in 1991, they said:

"Our labour legislation...is already the most comprehensive in North America. If it undergoes the kind of radical change that is envisaged in these"—Bill 40—"proposals, we shall merely add to the existing pressures which threaten the maintenance of jobs in" this province. "We will also reduce the chances of obtaining new investment and new jobs."

Unfortunately, the then Minister of Labour didn't hear these warnings and dismissed them out of hand, at a time when Ontario was in desperate need of private sector investment and job creation.

Less surprisingly, the labour representatives on the committee endorsed the NDP's wish list.

In 1991, a cabinet document was leaked and it stated very clearly, it spoke of the need for the NDP "to neutralize opposition from the business community" on this very important issue.

In November 1991, Bob Mackenzie released a dis-

cussion paper that launched another province-wide consultation on the proposed changes to the Labour Relations Act, and then they went through first and second readings in this place and committee hearings across the province.

Finally, in November 1992, our party was very pleased to join with our friends in the official opposition in opposing this bill. Every member of the Conservative Party in this place joined every member of the Liberal Party in this place and voted against Bill 40.

Our party even went so far as to place an ad in the Globe and Mail that week which said quite clearly that we would repeal Bill 40, signed by our leader, to be clear and specific to the people of the province of Ontario. That same commitment was placed on large signs in PC campaign offices across the province during the recent election campaign to show people that we were very serious in wanting to bring real change to Ontario.

We also included it as a major component in the Common Sense Revolution, ou la Révolution de bon sens, which was sent to literally hundreds of thousands, even millions of homes across the province. Repealing Bill 40 was a key element in our plan to create jobs and eliminate barriers to job creation and encourage investment in the province of Ontario.

Our leader, our platform and our candidates have been very clear on this issue. Everyone has known the simple fact that, if elected, we would repeal Bill 40. We wouldn't study it, not review it, not amend it. We said we would repeal it, and we said we would repeal it to create jobs and encourage investment in Ontario, and that's what we're doing this week.

Let me be clear that the Liberal Party hasn't pulled any punches in their criticism of Bill 40 either. In 1992 the honourable member for Fort William said that Bill 40 would "polarize labour and management to an extent never seen in this province." The Leader of the Opposition went on to say, "This legislation"—Bill 40—"is clearly driving investments from Ontario at the very time when we most need policies that will create a positive climate for investment in this province."

And she wasn't alone in this House. The honourable member for Renfrew North, who's not with us today, indicated very clearly that this bill, this "untimely legislation...is fundamentally unbalanced." He added that, "Bill 40 will hurt, not help, economic recovery and it will hurt, not help, job creation."

These statements were true in 1992 when they were made; they were true when the Liberal Party drafted their red book during the recent election campaign; and they're just as true today as this government works to create hope and opportunity and jobs in Ontario.

During the election campaign, our commitment to repeal Bill 40 was well known across the province. It was discussed at all-candidates meetings and by candidates at the doorsteps and on the main streets of small-town Ontario. It was published in campaign literature, debated on television and covered in the newspapers.

In fact the previous government used to brag about how much consultation was carried out on this issue, and, to be very clear, our proposal to repeal Bill 40 is a product of that debate.

We put our proposals to the voters of Ontario and they rendered a clear and unequivocal verdict. We had the largest-possible consultation on this issue. The member for Lanark-Renfrew bragged that this was the biggest consultation ever taken on a single issue.

We were very clear with 10 million people in Ontario. We were very clear in our consultations with 10 million people across the province during the 40-day election campaign that this would be done, and we got a resounding vote of confidence, as evidenced by the results of the June 8 elections.

Our Minister of Labour, Elizabeth Witmer, has engaged in extensive public consultations with regard to the improvements that this government is proposing in workplace democracy. Numbered among these respondents were 68 employer associations and 17 community groups and academics, in addition to 47 unions. Furthermore, the members of this Legislature discussed these changes with constituents for many, many months.

Personally, I've spoken with, among others, members of the United Steelworkers of America and many small business people to obtain their input on these workplace democracy initiatives.

1610

Bill 7 will restore a delicate balance to the workplace. It will attract new investment to Ontario and it will proclaim very loudly around this world that Ontario is open for business once again. Essentially, it returns labour relations to the level playing field which existed in 1992 prior to Bill 40. It does not set labour relations back 40 years, as some critics have suggested.

Bill 7 also repeals Bill 91, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act, a bill that was strongly opposed in rural Ontario and small-town Ontario, and we're very pleased to include the repeal of the Agricultural Labour Relations Act as part of Bill 7.

Bill 7 lifts the ban on replacement workers, protecting the basic right of employers to maintain their operations during a labour dispute. Bill 7 also contains, as I mentioned earlier, workplace democracy measures which will strengthen the democratic rights of individual workers. This is good news for working people in the province of Ontario. Specifically, these include mandatory secret ballots for union certification, contract ratification and strike votes.

Those of us on this side of the House believe that secret ballot votes will more accurately determine the true issues of workers in this province. It will legitimize decision-making processes in the eyes of workers and employers alike, as it will strengthen the collective bargaining process as a whole, and it will remove many of the costly and litigious features of the current Labour Relations Act.

I ask, who could oppose secret ballots to determine the true wishes of workers? Who could oppose the very format, the very way we were all elected to this House? A secret ballot will be held for union certification that will allow people to make a private decision, a secret decision.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): We should bring the secret ballot to votes in here.

Mr Baird: My friend opposite will be encouraged to learn that normally these votes will be held within five days, which will be good news.

We have made the processes for union certification and decertification more equal. Now, secret ballots will be held if 40% support for certification or decertification is demonstrated in a workplace.

The purpose clause of the Ontario Labour Relations Act is being rewritten to promote harmonious labour relations. It recognizes the benefits of productivity, investment and job creation. Those are three priorities for this government: creating jobs, increasing productivity and encouraging investment in the province of Ontario. That's good news for workers.

Bill 7 contains provisions which will encourage the workplace parties to resolve problems on their own, including a quick consultation process in cases where full-fledged OLRB hearings are not necessary, the use of consensual mediation and arbitration and the assignment of certain cases to a single vice-chair.

I recently spoke with some Steelworkers who were particularly concerned with provisions affecting the unionization of the security guard industry. For the first time, Bill 40 allowed security guards to join unions which represent other workers and it allowed individual bargaining units to represent both guards and non-guards. Business people have argued that this presents a conflict of interest for guards charged with the responsibility of protecting property in the event of a strike. My friends in the Steelworkers will be very pleased to hear that we enshrined a process which will allow the Ontario Labour Relations Board to determine whether or not there is a conflict of interest on a case-by-case basis.

Bill 7 also includes a mechanism which is proven to effectively resolve jurisdictional disputes in the construction field. This will include a speeded-up resolution process that will be good news for those in the construction industry. These measures have broad support among all parties, I believe.

The people of this province want to get the province moving again as an engine of economic prosperity and growth. We should and must encourage them in that effort, and Bill 7 does just that.

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association has stated quite clearly that this legislation will have a positive impact on the economy and will send out a signal that Ontario is open for business once again. The CMA vice-president for Ontario, Paul Nykanen, says that Bill 7 will make Ontario more competitive while protecting the rights of employers and employees in this province.

The Hudson's Bay Co has already announced that they expect to create thousands of new jobs in the province of Ontario when we repeal this bill, and that's good news for workers. Jobs are good news for workers in this province.

Mr Wildman: What about Nestlé? What did Nestlé have to say?

Mr Baird: If my honourable colleague wants to go for a coffee, he can go outside the chamber.

This is a stark contrast to the situation surrounding the passage of Bill 40. Again, the member for Fort William clearly outlined the consequences of Bill 40 back in 1992. At that time she, the honourable member for Fort William, informed this Legislature that Dare Foods had cancelled plans to open a plant in Ontario and that Long Manufacturing had chosen to construct an upcoming plant in Michigan. Both were a direct result of Bill 40, she said, and if she said it, it must be true.

It is not surprising that there's a lot of support for Bill 7 across the province. In my own constituency, the Nepean Chamber of Commerce president referred to Bill 40 as "the worst piece of legislation that ever came to Ontario." His sentiments reflect a particular concern for the competitiveness of small business in this province, the number one source for new job creation. These people have first-hand knowledge of the need for equitable legislation to promote investment and business expansion.

If I could, I'd like to address one area that is of deep concern to me personally and to my constituents in Nepean: the spectre of violence that has been raised and even advocated by some individuals opposed to this bill. I think it goes without saying that there is no place for this kind of activity in our society. I make no apologies for fulfilling the promises we made to the electorate. That is what democracy is all about. Those who advocate violence and intimidation show a contempt for democracy which we simply cannot afford to accept.

In the words of the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker, "Our system of democracy is not something to tinker with lightly, or lay aside thoughtlessly." I think all members of this House will be very much against the spectre of labour unrest and violence, and we'd want to send that message out very clearly across the province of Ontario. That is certainly a very big issue of concern to people in this province, and I think we want to send a very clear and unequivocal message that violence of any sort in our society is unacceptable and it's wrong.

If we are to create hope, opportunity and jobs in communities across Ontario we need to support the people rather than hinder their efforts in creating jobs. Bill 7 provides this support by ensuring that the rights of employers and employees are equally protected. Bill 7 will create jobs, encourage investment in this province, and I'm very pleased to speak on its passage.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I'm pleased to rise as the Chair of Management Board and speak to the second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations. In particular, I would like to address those parts of the bill dealing with the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, the statute that governs labour relations in the Ontario public service and crown agencies, and the Public Service Act.

The proposed amendments respond to the changes brought about by the repeal of Bill 40 and to increase the flexibility of the government as an employer. The amendments proposed to CECBA are needed to ensure that the public service sector environment parallels the changes

that will occur with the repeal of Bill 40. In addition, the proposed amendments will give government the flexibility it needs to proceed with the major restructuring of the Ontario public service, one that will ultimately result in a more efficient and smaller organization. We promised the people of Ontario that we would cut the size of government and provide them with better government for less. We are now positioning ourselves to deliver on that promise.

1620

Mr Wildman: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Point of order, the member for Algoma.

Mr Wildman: I draw your attention, Madam Speaker, to standing order 23(d), page 16 of the Standing Orders. I didn't raise it with the previous speaker, since he was a new member to the House and I didn't want to interrupt his speech. But surely an experienced member like the Chair of Management Board will be aware that the standing orders indicate that a member is out of order if, "In the opinion of the Speaker," he or she "refers at length to debates of the current session," which he is not doing, "or reads unnecessarily from verbatim reports of the legislative debates," which he is not doing, "or any other document."

It appears that the member is reading at length from a document. He can just table the document. It's not necessary for him to give a speech reading the document. Unless he is just referring at great length to notes, the member is indeed, I would think if you consider it, out of order.

The Acting Speaker: I would say to the member for Algoma that the member for Don Mills is not out of order. As he well knows, members frequently require notes when they're making a speech. I believe I've seen at times the member himself on occasions reading from notes.

Mr Wildman: I never read a speech verbatim. I don't know how.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. I can assure the member that I will keep a close eye on the member for Don Mills to make sure that he is applying the rules of the House to his speech.

Hon David Johnson: Nice try. I thank you, Madam Speaker, for that most enlightened ruling.

To proceed with my ad-lib speech, at the same time that we're doing this I believe it is important to reiterate that nothing in the amendments to CECBA fundamentally alters the collective bargaining rights of the vast majority of Ontario government employees. More than 80% of the public servants will continue to have full collective bargaining rights. In addition, the government is willing to establish a framework agreement for limited bargaining for lawyers employed in the public service. The proposed amendments will also ensure the confidentiality of labour relations information by amending the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The proposed amendment concerning successor rights has received some attention. These proposed changes

recognize the difference between the application of successor rights in the public sector and the private sector. When successor rights are applied in the private sector, they relate to a business being transferred from one owner to another, where terms and conditions of employment are likely to be similar. In the case of transferring government work to the private sector, if successor rights applied, the private sector employer would have to assume the public sector employment terms, which may be considered too onerous for many private sector employers. Of course, workers would still have the right to organize and collectively bargain within that environment.

In the speech from the throne, we said we must get government spending under control. We have started the process by assessing which government activities are not necessary and which others are best left to individuals, communities or business. The government's intention to pursue alternatives such as partnerships between government and private businesses and opening government operations to outside competition means we need the flexibility as an employer to be able to consider all of these options. Offering government work that is not a core service to the private sector is one option that clearly we are considering. This would help us cut government spending, which we have already started to do by cutting funding of our own operations.

Meanwhile, we are reviewing every government program. We are asking all ministries to re-evaluate their activities, to identify what their core services are and how they will be delivered through a significantly reduced budget. This is not a one-year exercise. This kind of restructuring takes time, but it is essential if we are to create permanent change in the public sector.

We believe we need to take the necessary steps to spend less on administration so government can provide the best possible service to the people of Ontario. We need to get rid of duplication, reduce administrative costs and to find more efficient ways of organizing work. This is clearly not tinkering around the edges; this is a major rethinking of how we use taxpayer dollars to deliver public services. Ultimately, that means getting money back into the hands of people and businesses in Ontario to create jobs and growth.

The level of restructuring we are talking about within the government requires changes in the work we do, how we do it, and in some cases who will do that work or provide those services. Legislation such as the proposed amendments to CECBA will allow us to achieve those goals in the long term.

In addition, we propose amending the Public Service Act to harmonize with notice provisions in the private sector. This makes it possible for employees not covered by the collective agreements to be released with reasonable notice or compensation instead of notice.

In summary, let me say again that this government is committed to the restructuring of government, to cutting taxes and to balancing the budget. These measures will restore confidence in Ontario as a place to live and to work and to do business. To deliver on these commitments, and in particular the promise to restructure government, the government as employer must create an environ-

ment in which this can happen. The sooner we have that environment, the sooner we can meet our commitment to the people of this province: providing the people of Ontario with better government for less.

Hon Mr Sterling: Madam Speaker, I move to adjourn the debate.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Carleton has moved to adjourn the debate.

All those in favour of the motion?

Those opposed?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1628 to 1658.

The Speaker: Order. Members will take their seats.

Mr Sterling has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour will please rise.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 70; the nays 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Orders of the day.

Applause.

Hon Mr Sterling: Thank you for the support. The sixth order.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion to appoint the membership to the standing committees of the House for this session.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, the debate which has been moved by the deputy House leader on the other side, my good friend from Carleton, gives us an opportunity to discuss what I think is going to be a very critical issue, which I raised when we were last speaking, and that is the question of the process by which we will in fact be considering legislation in this Parliament.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Under the new rules, the Rae rules.

Mr Rae: I would say to my colleague from St Catharines that it's important for the House, looking at the way rules operate in virtually every Legislative Assembly around the world, that public business be allowed to take place. I also think it's important that majorities understand that when it comes to the consideration of legislation, it's going to be extremely important for government to give the committees we are establishing the opportunity to do their job.

In the last week or so, we've had an opportunity to understand why it is that this issue of process is not simply some minor legal point. In fact, it's quite basic to the work of government.

The member for Carleton will know that we have all participated over the last decade in a number of debates in which the role of committees has been reaffirmed, in which the important work that committees do has been reaffirmed, and in which members have achieved some quite significant gains in terms of the work of committees and their importance.

For example, it was under the accord signed in 1985 that we agreed that the names of people who were appointed to agencies, boards and commissions would be referred to a committee and that there would be a broadbased discussion on those appointments, that people would be expected to indicate their views and their sense of the issues before the committees on the work of the boards they were doing, that this would be something that would be carried out.

I'm pleased that my colleague the deputy leader and the member for Nickel Belt has agreed to serve on this important committee, because he knows as well as I do that the issue of who is being appointed and their qualifications and their ability to do this work is a significant question.

At the same time, I don't think we can ignore the lessons we've had to come to terms with, in the last while, in the work of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The minister has indicated very clearly that it was his intention to proceed with certain amendments to regulations, which regulations have a major impact on the most vulnerable citizens in the province.

It's of great concern to all of us that that minister has yet to tell the House how it was that these regulations came to be drafted. He's told us what he did once they were drafted and he's told us how it was all a mistake, but the so-called candid and open account which the minister gave the House in his statement on Tuesday failed to disclose two simple and, I would have thought, rather critical facts: first, who was it who gave the instructions for these amendments to be made; and, second, who was it who signed the document, and how was it that this very, very nearly became law, until the mistake was discovered very close to the date of October 1?

Yesterday, I asked the minister three times whether he would commit to bringing in legislation which would deal with this issue of changes to social assistance. I would even suggest that it would be wise for the government—since, I would say to the minister, there are people in both opposition parties who have more experience of dealing with the ministry than he does and who, I suspect, have views which he might be surprised to hear, because they do not stem from any ideology but stem from experience, from a shared sense of some of the very real human issues we face as well as the need to find a greater efficiency and greater effectiveness in the delivery of services. I haven't met a minister in this field who hasn't come away feeling that there was a better way for this job to be done and a better way for this job to be organized.

What better way to activate some of that spirit than to assign to one of the committees of the House—perhaps it could be the committee on resources development, perhaps the standing committee on general government, perhaps the standing committee on social development, some of the committees whose membership we're establishing today. Wouldn't it be interesting to have the former ministers who are in our government, who would I think be very glad to come forward with members of the government to discuss very actively how we would reorganize social assistance in such a way that it could be done better.

We understand that the government has its agenda. We are under no illusions about that. But I would have thought it would be in everyone's interest to use the advice and the experience of people on this side of the House in coming to terms with these changes.

The work of these committees which we are establishing can either be important or unimportant, depending very much on the approach that's taken by the government. We've seen over the last week that a government acting on its own through the process of regulation can make some very major mistakes.

Let me say to the minister that there are, from my experience in life, two basic theories on how things go wrong. There is what I call the conspiracy theory of life and then there is what I call the screw-up theory of life.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Workers' Compensation Board]): You are talking about the last provincial election.

Mr Rae: My observation of human experience even includes the member from Burlington. That's how wide my scope is; that's how broad my view is. Nothing human is alien to us over here. We understand it includes all varieties of human experience, including that offered by the frustrated member from Burlington, though in fact—

Hon Mr Jackson: How many of yours screwed up? Was it five or six cabinet ministers?

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Burlington South is out of order.

Mr Rae: I know, as we all know, the disappointment that lurks deep in the heart of the member for Burlington South. We wish him well in his frustration and we hope he can overcome it. We know full well that there's no member opposite who is looking more eagerly at the performance of his colleagues than the member for Burlington South.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Well, there is the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Mr Rae: We know that together with his colleague from Etobicoke, they're two frustrated folks, and there are many others who are looking so carefully at the performance of their colleagues. No one more eagerly than the member from Burlington is assessing carefully the conduct of his colleagues as they answer the questions that are coming.

Hon Mr Jackson: What about your screw-ups? Are you going to put them in your book, Bob? That's all I want to know.

The Speaker: The member for Burlington South is continuously being out of order, and I won't warn him again.

1710

Mr Rae: What I would say to you, Mr Speaker, and say to the honourable member for Burlington South, since he's responsible for the area of workers' compensation, on which we understand he's already got his marching orders, I'm not quite sure now what his task is. Having been told to cut, cut, cut he now has his work cut out. All the other administrative decisions are being taken. Certainly when we look at the member for Burlington, we know

that second fiddle is a very hard part to play, especially when they won't even give you a bow. That makes it even harder.

Interjections.

Mr Rae: That makes it harder. When they actually give him a bow, imagine how well he's going to do.

But I want to say that the question now—the voters have made their choice and yes, there's a majority Conservative government in place, but that doesn't take away from our rights and our obligations on behalf of the people we represent to ensure that the committees that are established, which we're establishing by motion of the member for Carleton today, in fact have a useful and constructive role to play.

I must say the concern that I have with this government is not only that it is moving forward from an ideology which they've stated and created in the Common Sense Revolution, but that furthermore they are moving by purely administrative action. Contemplate the fact that the government of this province was able to reduce welfare benefits by some 22%, which is the largest decrease that's ever been brought in in the history of the province in one fell swoop. No decrease has been greater than that; no single decrease has been greater. One can hardly conceive of a single step that's had a more dramatic impact on the incomes of hundreds of thousands of people.

They were able to do that without recourse to the Legislature, without recourse to a public debate of any kind within the confines of the Legislature, without requiring any legislative move, without requiring any consultation with anybody. We saw that not only could they reduce the benefits by some 22%, but they could even contemplate the reduction or the elimination of entire categories of eligible people simply by virtue of two pens: the pen that's in the hand of the Minister of Community and Social Services and the pen that's in the hand of the chairman of cabinet, the member from Leeds.

I must say I find it ironic, because there has been in my experience in government, and in my life in the Legislature, no harsher critic, no stronger judge of any possible human error, no one who has been more brutal in his immediate willingness to judge—to be judge, jury and hangman all in one sentence—than the member for Leeds-Grenville. I can't remember anyone who was not more instantly prepared to assume the worst of any of us, to instantly imagine that we were all singularly—

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's with the greatest respect that I would ask you to recognize that the leader of the third party is maligning the Solicitor General and not speaking to the motion, the motion you are fully familiar with. To malign the Solicitor General is not speaking to the motion.

Mr Rae: I would just say that I find it ironic that it was that member who in fact signed the cabinet regulation, who signed the order in council which was later proven, shown to have been drafted in error. Obviously he hadn't read what he had signed, otherwise—we have two explanations: One explanation would be that they both read what they'd signed, that they knew exactly what they

were doing and that this was all some deliberate plot on their part which was then discovered by the Toronto Star.

Now, if I were even to suggest such a thing, my good friend—and I would suggest to her that I've demonstrated that loyalty in a variety of ways over the last several months—from Mississauga would be the first to leap to her feet and to accuse me of maligning one of her colleagues, which would be the last thing I would want to do, that someone of my experience and eternal goodwill would be willing to do.

So I come back to my two views of history. I am not a member of the conspiracy school of history. I don't believe that's how these terrible mistakes happen. They happen because people make mistakes and that's what happens. The minister made a mistake. The member for Leeds-Grenville made a mistake.

But it's the member for Leeds-Grenville, the Solicitor General—and I appeal to my colleagues, which I have occasion to do from time to time, and ask them to reflect on the number of occasions when either the Liberal government was in office or we were in office when the member for Leeds-Grenville would, I am sure, have been absolutely merciless in asking who gave the pen, who was it who gave the pen, who made him sign it, did he read it before he signed it, how could he possibly aspire to be in public—

Mrs Marland: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Maybe you could explain to this House what the current comments of the leader of the third party have to do with the motion.

The Speaker: I don't think it's my place to explain anything to the House.

Mr Rae: Mr Speaker, I'll be glad to explain that to the member from Mississauga. My point is, once you accept the reality of what took place with respect to the benefits for tens of thousands of people whose benefits were about to be eliminated by mistake, you then appreciate the importance of the role of committees and the importance of our establishing committees in ensuring that mistakes of this kind do not happen.

It was Mr Justice Brandeis, one of the great jurists of the 20th century, who said, "The greatest disinfectant known to government is sunlight." We demonstrated that over the past week. Who are the beacons of sunlight in our parliamentary system? It is the committees that we establish. These are the beacons, and it is obvious from the conduct of the government that it is interested in shutting down those beacons. They are prepared to turn down the lights. They are prepared to pull down the shades on the sunlight which we want to bring in. Our concern—

Interjection.

The Speaker: I warned the honourable member for Burlington South once. I said I would not warn him again, nor will I. I will name the honourable member and the Sergeant at Arms will take him from the chamber.

Mr Jackson left the chamber.

The Speaker: The leader of the third party has the floor.

Mr Rae: Mr Speaker, I appreciate that.

What I want to say is that the role of these committees, and the role that is assigned to them by this government, is going to become even more important as the days go on. I know members will look at me with some scepticism, and I understand that because they have their own views as to what takes place. But I want to say to them, they have to come to terms with what's happened, they have to come to terms with the fact that this isn't just a matter of somebody being appointed by mistake.

Let me just say I can remember, for example, that somebody would come forward with a bunch of names and we'd all say, "Now, is this the right John Jones from Hamilton that we're appointing to the housing authority?" So we'd doublecheck, triplecheck, and then we'd make changes, and there's nothing wrong with that. People make mistakes. Public servants make mistakes, civil servants make mistakes, ministers make mistakes. We all make mistakes. We understand that. I make mistakes every day, every day. But I would say to my colleagues, even the littlest and even the greatest among you will make mistakes as well. Therefore, what is the course of wisdom?

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I know that there's the arrogance and hubris that's there with a 50% or 60% number in the polls, and believe me, I've been there once—very briefly—but it was nice when I was there. I remember those days. I remember how—

Interjection: You had 66%.

Mr Rae: I think we were up to 67% at one point. You were there. You, my colleagues in the Liberal Party, have been there, and it's great. You walk around and you feel, suddenly, slightly more bounce in your step, and you feel a little better facing those awful scrums and all the various attacks. You feel good because you know that the public is out there.

But I want to say to members opposite—and I know that in the large numbers that are there you've got the support of the Common Sense Revolution and you know it's wonderful and it's all great, and you know we're just a small group of people who you think have been totally discredited and have no particular credibility. All I want to say to you, in the most modest way that I possibly can: This will change.

Ms Lankin: This too will change.

Mr Rae: This too will change. Mark my words. Let this be the date. Mark it down. October 18, I suggested to you—

Interjection: It's the 19th.

Mr Rae: The 19th; tomorrow is the 20th, my brother's birthday. I would say that this will change. As sure as the sun—which Mr Justice Brandeis spoke about so eloquently—as sure as it rises and as sure as it falls in the evening, this will change.

So the wise course for government is to understand a couple of things. What have we asked for from this government? Well, we've made two major requests in the last week. Have they been to say to the government, "You have no right to bring in your agenda"? No. Has it been to say, "You have no right to bring in your budget or your plans"? No.

We understand; we can see the writing on the wall. Having been in government, we have some sense as to what it's going to take to achieve an agenda which we think is, frankly, absurd in its ambitions. But nevertheless it's there. You've been elected, and you are going to carry that out. We will oppose you, and we will continue to oppose you.

But what is at stake today? We're asking in particular two things which have to do fundamentally with the role of committees. The first thing we're asking is: If travelling was good enough for Bill 40, and if a full process of public debate and public hearings was good enough for Bill 40, then it's good enough for Bill 7. A very simple point.

You took out ads. Remember the member talked about the ads that were taken out and how clear the government was. Well, you've gone beyond a mere repeal of Bill 40, something which I'm sure will give some discomfort to our friends here in the middle. They no doubt will recognize the stuff that you've added on decertification, the stuff which will create enormous instability in the workplace in terms of how this will work and how it will function. The business leaders that I've talked to—I talk to them all the time—feel that you've gone unnecessarily far, you don't need to do this, you don't need to go this far, you don't need to create that much instability.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): Nestlé.

Mr Rae: Why would Nestlé be making the statement that they're making? This is not exactly a group that is strongly affiliated to any particular political party. These are practical people with experience, who know that governments can make mistakes; that people can get carried away; that in the process of drafting, somebody can, frankly, screw up, to use the colloquialism that I use.

Therefore, what you need to have is a process that's as wide as possible, not that's narrow. Don't think the bureaucracies, the people who go off and draft these pieces of legislation, never make a mistake. Don't assume that they always know what they're doing. Don't assume that every single piece of information that comes to the cabinet has answered every question. Don't assume that they know everything. They're human beings like us. They live in fairly narrow circles, they have to work under great pressure, under great strain. They frequently are being asked to do too much too quickly.

In the case of Bill 7 they were asked fairly quickly to draft a very, very major piece of legislation. The minister herself admitted, in answers to questions from my colleague from Hamilton Centre, that she'd already begun to have discussions with people and was already considering making changes. Which ones? Which ones would she be considering making? What would the process be which would allow us to discuss this? Why wouldn't the House be permitted the opportunity for the committee to go? There may be some soul in Thunder Bay or Ottawa or even North Bay who might have a point of view that would be different from the collective wisdom.

Interjection.

Mr Rae: My friend from Windsor, my colleague here, is interrupting to mention his community, one to which I

am tremendously attached because of the work that we did on behalf of his community and have done over the years.

Interjection.

Mr Rae: One doesn't always get one's rewards in this lifetime. I'm reconciled to that simple fact.

So when it comes to Bill 7 it seems to me we are entitled to ask, as we have been asking, why would the members of the government be so reluctant to have a broad discussion? It doesn't have to be about limitless time. It doesn't have to be one that goes on forever. I can understand the interests of the government in saying they want this legislation to proceed.

We understand that with the rules which we brought in and which I'm strongly in favour of—having argued for them in government, I'm hardly going to turn around and argue against them in opposition. But I believe that even under these rules the government should see the wisdom, with legislation as major as this, in allowing the committee to travel and allowing the committee to have hearings. It's a reasonable suggestion. It's not an unreasonable suggestion.

Mr Duncan: Balanced and moderate.

Mr Rae: It is, as one would always expect from this party, balanced. It's thoughtful, it's moderate and it's a constructive suggestion. That's what I pledged to be as leader of our party, and I shall continue to argue in favour of that.

I shall be very determined in defence of moderation, because one should not confuse my determination to be moderate with our determination to ensure that the government listens. I can understand that members who are new to the House will be quite frustrated with the bells ringing and with coming back and voting, and they'll say to themselves: "What the heck is this all about? I didn't get elected to do this." I would say to them that there's a reason why this is happening. The reason it is happening is because we want to ensure that there's a process in place, that's established early on in our life as a Parliament, in which there is some element of mutual respect and some understanding of the need to listen to the people.

If there's one message that I hear from social service agencies, from the heads of children's aid societies, from the heads of municipalities, from all sorts of groups, it is this: "They're not listening. They don't want to hear from us. They've made up their mind. They don't care." I can see there is certainly some sort of blissful serenity that those who have found all the answers and know the truth can feel when confronted with a bunch of people who happen to have a different perspective.

But I'm constantly amazed at the number of people who I would have thought would be very well connected: conservative lawyers, people who are active in the social service field who are well known to me as conservatives, very well known to me as conservatives—and I'm not yet in a position because we haven't evolved, our relationship hasn't become that close yet to say who all these people are, but in time I think their names will become very well known to the public—who say: "How do we get to the government? How do we get to people? How do we find

a way in? They're not listening. They don't return our phone calls."

They literally don't return the phone calls. The mayor of the city of York—not a huge municipality, not a colossus in the field of municipal development, the city of York, a city of 125,000 people. All you've done is cut off the subway which was the major source of hope in terms of construction and ended up damaging the infrastructure hopes of the city. She says she's made dozens and dozens of phone calls to the office of the Minister of Transportation. They don't get answered. No one answers the phone.

This is something which the government can remedy. The government can remedy this. The government can remedy it with a different kind of style, with a different sense of how to deal with the world. One of the ways in which we're saying you can deal with this, something as basic as Bill 7, is to say: "We are prepared—we are happy—to hear from the public. We want very much to get out and hear people. We think we're right, but we'd like to hear from people."

It's very clear they have an agenda. It's very clear they have an approach. But in labour relations, which at one time was one of my major fields of interest and something in which I did a lot of work and gave a lot of advice on, one is wise to listen to the practitioners, one is wise to listen to the folks who say, from the point of view of management: "This is not going to help us to manage our operations. This is going too far. It's going to create instability where we don't need uncertainty."

1730

It's a simple fact of life, which the members opposite don't like to hear, that in fact in the private sector labour relations have actually been better in the last five years than they've been for some considerable period of time. Now, there are many explanations for that.

The recession is, unfortunately, a partial explanation. The number of days lost to strikes has been reduced, I would think most economists would argue, because the recession has created a climate in which people are very reluctant to challenge the employer, and in which employers are looking for very little other than just steady work in order to maintain production.

But there's another explanation: The substance of Bill 7 created a climate in which labour and management had to deal directly with each other—

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Bill 40.

Mr Rae: —in a positive and constructive way—Bill 40; excuse me—and that's what took place.

I'm not here simply to reargue the merits of Bill 7 and Bill 40. There will come a time, and a substantive time, for us to do that. What I am here to do is to say to the government that when they move a motion to establish the standing committee on resources development, it would be wise for them to indicate to us that they understand that in setting up that standing committee they do not want it to be a rubber stamp. They expect it to do its work, and they are prepared to allow it to do its work, and they are prepared to allow it to listen to concerns that the public has across the province with respect to the matters which

will be put before it. And we know that one of the most significant matters that is going to come before it is Bill 7.

I now want to turn from that question to the question which I touched on before and will touch on many times again, but which I want to touch on now, and that's the issue of the standing committee on social development.

Mrs Marland: No. You are not going to speak on a committee, are you? You are not going to speak to the motion, are you?

Mr Rae: I have been speaking to the motion, I say to my colleague from Mississauga South, and I will continue to do so. Sometimes one has to elaborate one's points and one's arguments to give them a bit of colour and context in order to make a point, and this is necessary. I spoke—

Mrs Marland: Keep us awake.

Mr David Turnbull (York Mills): Depth and texture.

Mr Rae: Well, I appreciate the encouragement that I'm receiving from the other side.

I think we've all witnessed in the last while one of the most extraordinary signs of—I just say a little light should go on in the minds of members opposite, and I say to all my colleagues in opposition—not all of them are members of the cabinet—that I'm sure there are some interesting discussions in their caucus meetings about how this could have happened, explaining to us exactly how it took place and what it was all about. Because from my experience, caucus meetings are among the most interesting meetings that you can have because there's a wide range of views in every caucus, and there's usually a lot of candour in the caucus—in fact, far more candour than one would find in this place in terms of what opposition members would say.

When I was Premier, I always had one or two colleagues who were candid inside caucus and also candid outside caucus, and it's a wonderful thing. I can only imagine what the caucus discussions, as the people become more comfortable, as the ritual songs from the CSR begin to wear a little thin, and as the compulsory standing up and applauding wears a little bit thin—

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Less spontaneous.

Mr Rae: —and it all becomes a little less spontaneous, and as you go back to your ridings and people start saying: "Wait a minute, that project was a good project. When we talked about restraint we didn't mean that project; we thought we meant somebody else's project. What about this?"

Let me tell you, once the member for Parry Sound brings forward his budget statement, oh, things are going to become very interesting indeed, because the cuts that are going to have to be made to the transfer partners, as the transfer partners are let in on the secret world which is now confined to the cabinet and all those papers that come with the options—we used to call it the Goldilocks theory of government—the option would come forward to the civil servant who would say, "Oh, no, Premier, that's too hot," and then they'd come forward with another option and say, "Oh, that's too cold," and then they'd have option 2, "That's just about right, and that's the one we think you should do."

The members of caucus don't get to go to them; they don't get to see those little option papers that are presented, those thick briefing books that you have to go through. You wade and you plow your way through them, and finally you get to the point where—if we could only talk candidly and share and say, "I saw that briefing material four years ago." I'm sure my colleagues in the Liberal Party would feel the same thing. When the list came out of the things to be cut, I said to myself: "Boy, that's a list I've seen before; where have I seen that list before," all the range of things.

And you're going to have to go much, much deeper because of the income tax cut which you're now religiously committed to. I mean, it's passed beyond the world of normal political engagement; it's passed beyond even the rhetoric of a sacred trust. This is now an absolute matter of religious obligation and fidelity, which in my view is a very dangerous way to run a government, but nevertheless that's the way you intend to proceed.

Mr Speaker, when that takes place, the discussion within caucus is going to become more lively, and I know, sir, that you will feel more than ever before the loneliness of your office because you won't be able to go to those caucus meetings and participate in that kind of exchange.

But it will be lively and it will be real. I say to my colleagues, you should be asking some very tough questions about how it could be that day after day you appear to be bumbling your way through one of the most difficult issues, which is now you deal with the question of social assistance. It's not easy.

It's not easy, but it's made particularly more difficult if you are determined to do it without the participation of the Legislature. You will make it far more difficult for yourselves than you need to, unless you realize the need for a genuine consultation.

I was speaking today to a group of advocates who have been working in this field for a great many years, in the field of disability. They are a group of people who are not particularly political, not particularly partisan. They include people I know who've been very critical of us in government, who were very critical of the predecessor government—

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): Oh, no, they weren't.

Mr Rae: Oh, the member for Oriole's memory is far rosier than I can recall, but that's all right. If she chooses to live in this world, I can hardly blame her at this point.

But I said to them, "Well, have you been talked to? Is anybody talking to you?" and they said no. The minister yesterday said he's now actively engaged in consultation. I'm sure one day he'll get to them. Somebody at some point will pick up the phone and say: "Oh, yes, we should phone these people. They know about these issues."

But I would say to the minister, who's not here, and I would say to his colleagues and to members opposite, you are going to have to deal with this question of process, and you're better off facing up to it early on and saying, "We have such confidence in the integrity of our agenda and what we're trying to do that we want to open up this process to a real discussion."

When I look at the standing committee on social development and I see the members who are there from all political parties— we've got two of our most experienced colleagues on the committee, former ministers; you've got former ministers from the Liberal Party—I would think the wisest course would be for the minister to get together with the committee on social development right away and say: "Look, we made a big mistake on these regulations. Now we don't know what we're doing."

The minister says, "We haven't made any decisions yet." I referred earlier to what I called the screw-up theory, but in order to understand the screw-up theory, there has to have been something which set it off. I tried to get the minister today to answer the question, how would it be that staff would be preparing regulations unless someone told them to do it?

From my experience, the officials in Comsoc do not spontaneously come forward with changes to regulations. They don't do that. They don't do it that way. They only do it if they've got instructions to do so. And not only do they need instructions saying, "Please go off and draft regulations." "On what, sir? What exactly are you trying to achieve? What is it you want to do?" They would say, "Minister, you have to tell us what the context is for this."

Then there would be the relationship with the Premier's office and cabinet office and there would be phone calls from the deputy minister or the assistant deputy minister to people in the cabinet office saying: "What is this all about? Is there a cabinet ruling? Is there a cabinet minute that tells us what this is about? Is there some kind of set of instructions that tells us what the confines of this are?" That's how government works. I know that, the members next to me know that, everyone in the cabinet knows that, and caucus members will learn it. It's an open process.

We can't get the cabinet minute, because that's confidential. We understand that. Under the rules, under the way our Parliament operates, you can't see the cabinet minute. I appreciate that. But I can't believe, and I don't believe, that there was no cabinet discussion on the question of what exactly the nature of the first round of social assistance cuts would be. There must have been.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): No.

Mr Rae: I say to the minister, be careful now, because you might be divulging cabinet secrets, and you certainly wouldn't want to do that. I would hate to see your career damaged so early on in flight, as it's just leaving the water. The loons are heading south at this point in time, and we know how long it takes those loons to get up off the water. And if you only have one right wing, you go around in circles all the time.

Clearly, what happened in this instance is that there was some cabinet minute or some instruction from the minister to his staff which produced the regulations on August 29. It is not credible to suggest that in one day the ministry, by means of what I described the other day as spontaneous combustion, came up with a series of amendments, and the minister looks at them and asks, "Is any of this about disability?" "No, sir." "Fine, go ahead." That isn't

credible. That isn't how it works. I know that; the minister knows that. Why wouldn't he have the candour to say, "Well, I did tell them, but I wasn't clear in my instructions, or the cabinet minute was vague"? Or perhaps the cabinet minister wasn't as precise, the instructions as clear, as they could have been. "We're all new at this."

Hon Mr Sterling: Dream on.

Mr Rae: The member's saying, "Dream on." Tell me how it would be that on August 29—

Hon Mr Sterling: You know exactly what happened. **Mr Rae:** No, I don't know what happened. I'm not being difficult.

Hon Mr Sterling: They made a mistake. A lawyer made a mistake.

Mr Rae: "A lawyer made a mistake."

Hon Mr Sterling: Legislative counsel made a mistake.

Mr Rae: I would say to the member opposite—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Lawyer to lawyer.

Mr Rae: That's right. I'm speaking to him marine to marine here, lawyer to lawyer. I say to him it is precisely because lawyers make mistakes that confirms my theory: Not only should the minister have looked at it, the member looked at it, but also, when you're dealing with regulations that affect as large a subject as this, you would be well advised to refer them to committee before you bring them in. You'd be well advised, if you're going to make further big changes—

Hon Mr Sterling: Did you do that? Did you do that with one regulation? You didn't do it with one regulation.

Mr Rae: —to do it by means of legislation and not by means of regulation.

I hate to see the member's blood pressure go up the way it's going up. He's a man of great serenity and great experience, and I would be very surprised to see him lose himself. To have two ministers go out in one day, Mr Speaker, would be excessive, as they say.

What I would suggest is that the members opposite reflect on this last week of experience: first, with respect to Bill 7, the need to have a commitment to hearings, which is not illegitimate. If you treat the labour movement as a group of wild-eyed outsiders, you are encouraging those who would see this as a confirmation of their views of the current reality in the province. If you treat labour as a partner, from my experience, it will act as a partner. That, it seems to me, is a simple lesson in life and a simple lesson in human nature.

This government is determined to take a path which is very different from the one we took. In my view, it goes quite far, farther than it needs to go. But having staked out their ground as far as they have, how could they ever hope to re-establish a sense of their partnership? I would say to the members opposite, by demonstrating your commitment to a process that permits you to make change clearly built on a public opinion that is clear.

I would suggest this is a far wiser course than the one the government now appears to be set on taking. I don't see what the Premier possibly has to lose personally or what the government has to lose personally from saying: "We've set out our position. You know what it is. It's what we said we would do." Yes, but there are areas and ways in which it goes beyond the current consensus, and certainly goes beyond the pre-1992 legislation, and in which a wise course might be to say, "We want to listen to people and give people a chance to talk and then we're going to come back and make some changes."

I want to stress—I know this will cause some conniptions on the other side—that's what we did. Now, we didn't make all the changes we were asked to make, and members of the Liberal Party were very critical of us at that time because we didn't go as far as they wanted us to go; the members of the Conservative Party were very critical of us because we didn't accept as many changes as they wanted; some members of the business community were very critical.

But I must say that what I found fascinating about the debate around Bill 40—there was a process of vilification: I had my picture next to a donkey and all sorts of things, the one that's got the nice little pin-up shot now; every week there was a new thing, and that's okay—but at the end of the day we listened, we had a process, we had hearings, we had consultation, we had endless discussions, and we made changes. We listened.

Hon Mr Sterling: Listened? Give me a break.

Mr Rae: I say to the member for Carleton, I would concede that we didn't make all the changes he wanted, but we did make changes. If you don't think we made changes, you weren't at some of the discussions I was, where we had some very lively and difficult discussions about what they should be and how they should be balanced and so forth.

I don't see where the government loses anything at all. It doesn't lose command of its agenda; its agenda's very clear. It doesn't lose command of the issue; the issue, from their perspective, is very clear. It has everything to gain in terms of public credibility and understanding by agreeing to a process in which the public will be consulted across the province—not unlimited, but in a way that's manageable and thoughtful.

To come back to my point, on the question of what to do on amendments to social assistance, I say to the members opposite that you'd better think carefully about the experience we've all had this past week. You can't change something as significant as the definition of "disability," which the minister has said he plans on doing and which will have an impact on thousands and thousands of people in ways most members do not even begin to understand—there is an intricate web of definition and of entitlement which affects all sorts of people: veterans, people who are on Canada pension, people who've come off unemployment insurance and are being shifted into another program, people whose private disability has run out and they're incapable of getting work.

Let's face it, there are a lot of people in their 50s and early 60s who are going to find it enormously difficult to return to the labour force. Given their physical condition, in many cases people who have bad backs, who've been working in construction for 20 or 30 or 40 years, I really question whether this government understands the human impact of that change of definition.

I know what it's going to be like. I know exactly what my constituency office is going to be like. I've been there. We've been through it before, and I do not want to go through it again in the same way and I do not want to see my constituents forced through this ritual because some group of bureaucrats has come up with a definition that the government knows is going to save it a given amount of money.

1750

What's driving this change? It's quite simple. It's the fact that the Minister of Finance comes in and says, "This is the number we've got to get to," and turns to his colleagues and says, "and you'd better go off and find it, and this is where we're all going to go out and find it." You go backwards then to the redefinition. And when the minister says, "We haven't decided yet on the definition; we haven't decided yet on how we're going to change it"—though he makes reference to the fact that they're going to make it more restrictive and return to what they call a strict medical definition.

The whole category of people who are permanently unemployable has a range of criteria, some of which are social, some of which relate to mental health, some of which relate to the fact that there are some very marginal people out there.

From a practical point of view, I question whether it's wise for us to be expending all this effort and saying, "You're employable," knowing full well that that 54- or 56- or 58-year-old person is not going to find another job, not in today's labour market, not in tomorrow's labour market; that he or she is not going to find that job.

I would much prefer that in terms of job skill training and saying, "You're employable," we spend our effort on those people who really can get back into the workforce, and let's say to those people of whom we don't think it's realistic that that's going to happen: "Here you are. We're prepared to support you, and we don't want you to live in total poverty, we don't want you to live in permanent insecurity. We're prepared to do the decent thing."

I think the members opposite would be quite surprised at the kind of consensus which can be developed within the House. We all know we have to save money. Everybody knows that. Look at the last election campaign: Nobody was running in the last election campaign saying, "The answer to our problems is to spend more money." We disagreed on the tax question but—

Mr Turnbull: The Liberals were, Bob.

Mr Rae: Well, you know, the Liberals. They had a program, and some of it would have involved spending more and some of it would have involved spending less.

But it was interesting to notice this fact, quite a remarkable fact: If you were to speak to members of this government, what did we know? We knew we had to find \$2 billion because of the federal cuts. We knew that you're never sure what's going to happen on the revenue side, because our experience had been that revenues were very uncertain and could go up and down.

Therefore, we knew we had to find a process with the public sector partners in which we would be committed to finding that money, to not raising taxes, and to making sure the deficit continued on a downward course. If members opposite say, "You would have had to cut too," I say, yes, that's right, we would have, and so would members of the Liberal Party.

If we were all totally candid and honest, which we have an obligation to be, we would say, yes, we all would have had have to find it. The issue of how much? You have to find much more because of your tax cuts. It's quite simple. You've set yourselves a much higher target, raised the bar far higher, because you're determined to bring in your tax cuts. That's the reason, so that's the reason the bar has been raised so high.

The Speaker: The member's straying a little bit from the subject.

Mr Rae: Don't assume that the members of the opposition are uninterested or unprepared to deal with the reforms that need to happen—in committee, Mr Speaker, the committee process. Use the committees. Put out a white paper. If the minister has suggestions on disability, say, "Here's a whole bunch of definitions." Get the public servants out and let them say: "This is how much we would save. These are the people we think would be affected." Then let us call in the commissioner for social services for Metropolitan Toronto and go to Ottawa and call in the commissioner for social services there. Let them come forward and let the groups come forward and let the people who actually deal with these questions come forward and say, "This is what we think the impact of this will be." Then let us help the government, help the minister, to cope with the size and dimensions of this. This is the kind of approach we would like to take, because we believe that's a better approach than the one the government is determined to do.

I say to the government this is a constructive and positive suggestion, one that would allow all of us to get through a very difficult period. We are about to embark on the most significant change in public expenditure this province has ever, ever seen, and if this government believes it can carry out this change—and I say this four weeks prior to the statement by the Minister of Finance, but I say this knowing as well that he has to find at least \$9 billion but, I happen to agree with my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine, more likely a figure well into the double figures.

There is no way it can be done without huge reductions in transfers to municipalities, huge reductions in transfers to school boards, huge reductions in transfers even to hospitals.

Mrs Caplan: No, they won't do that.

Mr Rae: Well, we'll see. But I believe it's going to involve a range of changes such as we've never seen.

Everybody knows that if you want to save money in this province, you can do all the symbolic things you want, but when it comes right down to health, education and welfare, that's where the money is spent.

Mr Pouliot: That's where the money is.

Mr Rae: That's where the money is. That's what makes it so difficult, because taxpayers like the notion of cuts in general but they don't like the notion of cuts in specific. It's human nature.

So you say, "We're going to cut this much in welfare," and they've already cut the amounts that they've cut in the basic level of support. It's having a huge impact. That impact is yet to really—this is the first month, the first few weeks. People are reeling from it. But we don't know what the rent payments are going to be. We don't know what the impact in winter—we haven't had winter yet. So if members opposite think this process is going to be easy, it is not going to be easy.

The discussion that we're having today is a substantive discussion. What I'm suggesting to the members opposite is: We are willing and able and eager to work in a constructive and positive and thoughtful spirit in dealing with the impact of this.

The opposition will be vigorous. We're not going to support the general direction of what the government is trying to do, I'm not suggesting that for a moment, but I am suggesting that there's a lot of talent and ability among all the members of the House, and I would suggest a lot of experience outside politics and outside the legislative process among the members who've been newly elected. I would have thought that you all who aren't in cabinet would also be interested perhaps in having a bit of a say in what your political faith is going to be like over the next three and four years.

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): Caucus.

Mr Rae: You say "caucus." Well, caucus is one vehicle but it may not be sufficiently long and sufficiently broad to permit of the discussions which are required. You're going to find over time, as we get to know each other better, that there are going to be a lot of issues upon which we all agree, on which we all shake our heads and say, "How could the bureaucracy have come up with this kind of a suggestion?" or "Why would that have suddenly made its way through?" And the answer is not that there's a conspiracy, because I don't believe there is a conspiracy; I believe there's a government with a very ideological point of view that's putting a lot of pressure on people to come up with stuff very quickly and very fast, and I believe that when you do that, people make mistakes.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): It's inevitable.

Mr Rae: It's inevitable. It's natural. What we're trying to suggest is a process by which we reduce the number of mistakes; we allow for as much discussion as possible. I do not know of a piece of legislation that has not been improved by real discussion, debate, exchange, information, bringing the public in. We're always trying to create processes that allow this to happen. We used the Premier's Council. We used all the discussion mechanisms that we had. We used consultation in committee work. We got clobbered in going out to the public and saying, "Don't do this."

We completely changed course on Sunday shopping. Why? Because our members kept coming back from the committee and saying, "This isn't going to work." It took a long time, beating it into the Premier's head, and finally I said: "Okay, I get the message. It's not going to work." That happens. I changed my mind as a result of what I was hearing from my own colleagues on the committee and from what everybody was saying out on the street. People would say, "Well, that wasn't very difficult."

You will find the same thing. The things that you believe now everyone agrees with you will find aren't quite as easy to do. What we're suggesting is that in setting up these committees, the members opposite should reflect on the experiences and on the mistakes that we've made, that others have made, and surely to goodness, as we embark on this incredible process of change—incredible—and that we at least recognize that there's some wisdom in each of us and that even those of us who are not blessed enough to be in cabinet and blessed enough to be in P and P, even those of us have some ability to influence the course of human events in this province.

The Speaker: Does the government House leader have the orders for next week?

Hon Mr Sterling: Perhaps I could rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker, prior to reading the weekly business statement: I want to ask you to rule with regard to standing order 46(c) in terms of whether or not today was a sessional day within the meaning of that rule with regard to Bill 7 if it will be necessary for the government at some future date to call closure upon that particular bill.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Why? All you have to do is put it in committee.

Hon Mr Sterling: I'm asking for a ruling, and I'm entitled to do that. I would hope that it is not necessary, but I think for the clarity of the House it would be important for us to get a ruling on that particular matter, and I would ask you to consider that over a period of time.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I wish to indicate that for next week, the week of October 23, 1995, we will continue with second reading of Bill 7, and then, if we indeed complete the second reading of Bill 7, we will proceed to

second reading of Bill 8, An Act to repeal job quotas and to restore merit-based employment practices in Ontario. If that should be completed, then we would move to second reading of Bill 5, the Shortline Railways Act, and then to second reading of Bill 6, the Corporations Information Amendment Act.

For Thursday morning, private members' business, we will consider ballot item number 1 standing in the name of the member for Mississauga East, and ballot item number 2 standing in the name of the member for St Catharines.

It is also our wish to complete the debate on the motion we have just been considering, and that is setting the committees as soon as possible.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Mr Speaker, if I might before we adjourn, I understand the request that the acting government House leader has put upon you, but I would hope—and I have my own view. I think it's pretty clear that today was not a sessional day on Bill 7, but I think it would be rather strange for the Speaker to rule whether it's a sessional day working towards a time allocation motion which completely prejudges how the debate on Bill 7 is going to proceed over the next week or so.

I know the government is looking at having the minimum amount of time on second reading, minimum amount of time on public hearings, but, Mr Speaker, I do not believe you should play any role in developing that strategy for the government. I hope you will not be aiding them by giving a determination of whether today was a sessional day before they've even put their time allocation motion to try to shut this place down.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Thank you. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

The House adjourned at 1802.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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0 1 11	la Commission des accidents du travail	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
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Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I	Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation
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municipales et du Logement

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Rae, Bob (ND) Leader of the New Democratic

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Transportation / ministre des Transports

Duncan, Dwight (L)

Parker, John L. (PC)

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Monday 23 October 1995

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 23 octobre 1995



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 octobre 1995

The House met at 1332. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS INTERNMENT CAMPS

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): A chapter of Canadian history was brought back to life in Kapuskasing Saturday, October 14, with the unveiling of the Never Forget statue at the Kapuskasing internment camp cemetery in memory of internee prisoners of war.

This statue by Kingston-based sculptor John Boxtel tells the story of the thousands of Ukrainians and other east European immigrants who were unjustly interned as enemy aliens in 24 concentration camps across Canada. Between 1914 and 1920, thousands of internee prisoners of war were forced to work under difficult conditions, lost their freedom of property and valuables, and were disfranchised in 1917. In some cases, they were deported after the end of the First World War.

The Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Commission is asking that the Canadian government admit that an injustice was done. They are requesting an amendment to the Emergency Act to ensure that it doesn't happen again, that markers be placed at the 24 concentration camps across Canada, and that the property and money taken from the internees be put to use for historical education. The current value of the confiscated property is estimated to be roughly \$10 million.

The Kapuskasing statue is the second of its kind in Canada. The first was installed in Castle Mountain in Banff National Park last August.

This was a tragedy in Canadian history. Eighty years ago, when this tragedy occurred, we were a different country. We can take pride in how we have changed.

RUNNYMEDE CHRONIC CARE HOSPITAL

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): During the election, the Common Sense Revolution called for an end to government waste. To this end, our party proposed the start of a reward system for those public servants and institutions who used tax dollars responsibly. I sincerely hope this important principle of the Common Sense Revolution will apply to health care workers and all health care facilities.

The Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council's hospital restructuring committee apparently has not reflected this sensible approach. It is recommending closure of Runnymede Chronic Care Hospital despite its reputation as an exceptionally well run hospital.

The Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council can do what its restructuring committee failed to do: It can support those few hospitals which have avoided deficits during the past 13 years, particularly those which have accomplished that without cutting beds, reducing service or using questionable accounting techniques. It can recognize and reward those hospitals that have received the highest possible accreditation awards over the last nine years. The district health council can ensure that those few institutions which use tax dollars as judiciously as Runnymede hospital are not closed.

On behalf of the people of High Park-Swansea, a community that has demonstrated its strong support for Runnymede hospital's continuation and redevelopment by publicly raising \$10 million for the rebuilding program, I hope the district health council will review the recommendations of the restructuring subcommittee with this principle in mind.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): Later today I will be introducing a bill to promote the rights of victims of crime, referred to as the Charter of Rights for Victims of Crime. This is necessary since the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has in many ways become synonymous with the rights of the accused. Therefore, it has become apparent in recent years that governments must take steps to balance the often conflicting needs of the accused with those of the victim.

The people of Ontario are extremely concerned with the level and extent of crime in their communities. We must do all we can to make our neighbourhoods safe and enjoyable places in which to live, and we must also ensure that when citizens become victims, the justice system champions their rights and needs.

Our society has matured beyond an accused-based justice system to one that acknowledges the trauma and stress of the victims of crime and their important role within the system. Governments must take stock of this change and not only catch up to the expectations of the people but begin to lead. By passing this victims' bill, Ontario will join eight other provinces and one territory with such legislation.

This bill will address many of the concerns I have described. It will assist us to re-establish an equitable justice system in balance with the desires and expectations of the public. For the good of Ontario and its citizens I call upon all parties, particularly the government, which supports all the principles incorporated in this bill, to ensure that it becomes law.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Our party has been calling, since the introduction of Bill 7, for province-wide public hearings so that we may show very clearly that the disastrous story this government tries to tell about Bill 40 is in fact not the truth.

Indeed, the Premier's office and the minister are now receiving many letters from corporations and their unions indicating the benefits that have accrued to them from the introduction of Bill 40.

For instance:

"Nestlé Canada and the CAW urge that your government proceed cautiously and only after joint consultation with the business and labour communities before considering dismantling labour laws, regulations and practices which have stood the test of time for over a decade.

"Given the major stake we share in labour relations in Ontario, we believe a balanced approach to changes in labour legislation which deals with the legitimate concerns of business and labour and includes a thorough consultative process with those involved, is essential to an excellent investment climate."

We have similar letters from Nortel, which is Northern Telecom, where they speak of achieving "an unprecedented level of success at Nortel Belleville in every measure over the last few years, including labour relations."

We have a similar letter from Valeo that speaks of the investments that have been made in Stratford. Each of these businesses is concerned about the effect of disrupting the labour peace that we have in this province, and if we had public hearings this government would hear the truth.

JOHN BROOKS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): It is my distinct honour and pleasure to bring to the attention of this House an event which happened this past weekend. The John Brooks Community Foundation and Scholarship Fund held its 14th annual dinner and awards ceremony.

This event puts the spotlight on young people who are the source of pride for their families and communities. The awards granted recognize the determination of those youth to reach academic excellence and community volunteerism. I would say that community volunteerism is what this government is all about.

Since its inception in 1981, the scholarship fund has granted 517 awards to students, totalling \$79.5 million. The awards are made possible through the generous financial support of many volunteers, many corporations and many financial institutions.

On behalf of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and the government, I wish the John Brooks Community Foundation and Scholarship Fund, its organizers, its presenters, its participants and its recipients continued success. I applaud them for their commitment.

FOOD SHOPPING LIST

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Another event took place this past week; that was on Friday. A sample shopping list was presented by the Minister of Community and Social Services as part of a plan in which commonsense practical information is to be distributed to social assistance recipients and working people on low incomes to help them cope better.

After studying the list, it is truly in the spirit of the Common Sense Revolution because it doesn't make any. I wonder how the minister proposes to eat four packages

of Primo pasta without any sauce to put on it. Even a bit of butter or margarine would suffice, but they're not the list. Well, maybe the sauce can be an oil and garlic one. No; in the spirit of common sense, those aren't on the list. Pitch the pasta.

Let's make a salad from the list: a little lettuce, a little broccoli, a little cauliflower. Sounds like common sense so far. Now add a pinch of salt, a dash of pepper, a spray of oil and a drop of vinegar. No, that doesn't make any sense at all. A salad with salt, pepper, oil and vinegar? How extravagant. In this commonsense list, those four items don't make it either. Toss the salad.

The lack, though, of fish products makes great common sense, since the minister finally realizes that you cannot buy tuna for 69 cents a tin; a tuna-free commonsense list; a commonsense list with no bartering. Shelve the tuna.

There is, though, plenty of bologna and beans. In fact this list, like the minister's decisions and actions, is full of baloney, and that makes the greatest common sense of all.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): The legacy continues. The list of Tory hacks coming to Ontario to live off the avails of an unsuspecting taxpaying public grows, rather like a bad weed or a sore which festers. Today, in chapter 5 of the saga of the Mulroney-Harris affair, I present to the House one Mr Jean Lepine.

Mr Lepine has the dubious distinction of holding the position of executive assistant to Noble Villeneuve, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and minister responsible for francophone affairs.

While in Ottawa, Mr Lepine worked for Tory MP Jim Edwards. More recently, Mr Lepine was also executive assistant to Senator Norm Atkins, who himself was a Mulroney Senate appointee. It was Norm Atkins who chaired Brian Mulroney's national campaigns in 1984 and 1988.

I didn't realize that the relationship between Mike Harris and Brian Mulroney was so close. After all, when the Taxfighter was on this side of the House, he tried as hard as was humanly possible to distance himself from the Mulroney GST. But it does appear that Ontario is becoming a haven for Tory hacks who were booted out of Ottawa in November 1993. I wonder if there will be enough money in the kitty to employ them all.

CATHEDRAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I rise today to commend Cathedral Secondary School on its reunion on the weekend in Hamilton. The reunion of Cathedral Secondary School attracted over 5,000 people on Saturday evening.

Cathedral Secondary School has a long and rich history in the city of Hamilton and the province of Ontario. Opening in 1928, it has produced some of the finest people this province has ever seen. Among some of the alumni are leading corporate figures such as Paul Phoenix of Dofasco; Allen Fracassi, CEO and president of Philip Environmental; and others such as Glenn Cochrane of CFTO fame.

A number of alumni have included judges, clergy and at least three bishops in the province of Ontario, including the late Bishop Ryan and the late Bishop Redding of the diocese of Hamilton and Bishop Sherlock of the London diocese.

Many athletes, including Frank Cosentino, the great Canadian quarterback, the all-American linebacker out of Penn State, Peter Giftopolous, as well as Peter Mahovlich and other great NHL stars.

The achievements that Cathedral Secondary School has earned over the years are commendable. It has won all-Ontario basketball championships. It has one of the finest football records in the country.

The new Cathedral school opened about two weeks ago. It was an effort of three governments: the Liberal government, the Conservative government and the NDP government that made this possible. The school will continue its fine history. It will continue to produce some of the greatest people in the province in years to come. I want to thank all those who have played a role in the reunion on the weekend and the opening of the new Cathedral Secondary School, which we're all very proud of in the city of Hamilton.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): I stand here today to inform all members that this week is National Small Business Week. With the participation and sponsorship of local chambers of commerce and boards of trade across Ontario and Canada, National Small Business Week organizes seminars, workshops and many other activities.

In Ontario alone, small business constitutes approximately 98% of all businesses. Furthermore, small businesses occupy more than 90% of every sector of Ontario's economy, providing over 85% of all the new jobs created in this province.

Over the past decade, small business has been strangled by increased taxation, increased red tape and regulations, and increased provincial debts. Local business owners in my riding of Brampton North have echoed this sentiment, including Mr Duggan and Mr Harvey of Armor Personnel; Mr Brannon of Brannon Steel; Mr Vitale of Italpasta; and Andy McCutcheon of the Plus group.

Our government's commitment is to address these three concerns, and we wish to eliminate the unnecessary regulations affecting small business. I encourage all members of the House to take an active role in promoting the importance of small business and the jobs they provide Ontarians.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a South African delegation headed by Mr G.E. Nkwinti, Speaker of the province of Eastern Cape; Mr T. Gunning, Deputy Speaker of the province of Gauteng; and Mr E.N. Ginindza, Speaker of the province of Mpumalange, formerly Eastern Transvaal. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

I would also like to inform the members that in the west gallery of the Legislative Assembly we have today in the Speaker's gallery the Honourable Tomazinho Gardozo, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of India, accompanied by Mr S. Nanda, consul of India in Toronto. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I rise to ask for some direction. Today I have three areas of concern with regard to security around the Legislature.

First of all, one of our caucus members today sponsored a press conference, which is the norm, that if an outside group is going to have a press conference in the media studio a member of the assembly must sponsor that press conference, and the organization, as I understand it, was denied access to the media studio on the basis that there were too many members participating in the press conference.

I need to know, and I think all members of the Legislature need to know, if the rules have changed in terms of access to the media studio, what are the new rules and who has been involved in changing those rules?

Secondly, when I was going down to the cafeteria to pick up a sandwich, I noticed that there were numerous representatives from the Ontario Provincial Police from the SWAT team, dressed in their SWAT team outfits. I know there was supposed to be a demonstration today out in front of the Legislature, but again, I would like to know what the rules of the game are and who in fact is inviting—it's a very, very serious step to invite and ask for representatives from the SWAT team to come down to protect the Legislature. I think that's a very unusual step and I'd like to know what guidance and criteria are being used when representatives from the SWAT team, in their full outfits, are being invited into the Legislature and then walking around downstairs.

Thirdly, I'd like to know what authority there was and who made the decision to now install permanent barriers out in front of the assembly. I understand the difficulties that occurred on the day the speech from the throne occurred, but I think there will be a lot better atmosphere around this place if all of us are involved in making decisions with respect to security.

I'm very confused as to why there would now be permanent barriers installed in front of the assembly. No one from our caucus was involved in consultations for that decision.

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Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I must express a similar concern about a couple of aspects of it. Looking at it in a general sense, I really believe that the Legislative Assembly committee, once the committees are struck, should have that opportunity to review all security matters so that each of the parties represented in this Legislature can feel that it has had appropriate input and can review all of these decisions.

I understand there are always matters of concern to you, as Speaker, and to others about security in these days, but I do believe it would be important to consult all

the parties and have the Legislative Assembly committee deal with these before we get into erecting permanent barriers and things of that nature.

Second, I am concerned as well about the media studio. It has always been an opportunity for people—government or opposition or people from outside at the invitation and sponsorship of individual members—to make a point in the media studio so that there is a democratic opportunity to put forward a point of view.

Any changes to those rules I believe would be best dealt with by the Legislative Assembly committee. I do hope we can move forward with this going to committee as soon as possible and have that input from the elected members.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): We are as anxious as the other members of this Legislature to find answers to the questions posed. We did, however, earlier today inquire about the permanent posts which have been installed at the front of the Legislative Building and were told in response that they were there at the behest of the previous Speaker and that the contract had been let prior to your term in office, Mr Speaker.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): On the same point, I had a visitor from the press coming to see me recently, Mr Doyle-Marshal, who was actually searched and asked for his bag to be emptied out. In fact, he was asking me what was the procedure. I couldn't inform him what was the procedure in security. He has come in and out of this building many, many times and he's wondering why he has to be searched in that manner.

I would like that the Legislature move on this as urgently as possible so we can understand what the rules are

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): I met with the people who were gathered here to participate in the media conference in front of the Legislative Assembly, because not only had they been denied access to the media studio, they, as members of the public, had been denied access to the building. It was only when I escorted them into the building that they were permitted to enter this very public building, which they help pay for.

Mind you, I was somewhat grateful. I knew I wasn't going to get mugged, because there were enough police surrounding us that I was safe from any harm. Police and security staff accompanied us all the way to my office in the north wing, kept wait outside my office and then accompanied us as I took this group of people on a tour through the building.

I have no quarrel with the police accompanying me on a tour and I hope they enjoyed my pointing out the highlights of the building, but it is repugnant that members of the public are not allowed to enter this public place. One must question what are the standards to apply as to who gets in and who doesn't. Do you have to wear a blue suit to get in? Because I tell you, I'm not going to wear one for four more years.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I've heard the many points of order and I appreciate your bringing it to my attention. I will report back as soon as possible.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO BOARD OF PAROLE

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): Parole is a privilege, not a right.

This government made a commitment during the election, and reiterated it in the speech from the throne. We promised to shift the balance of the criminal justice system back towards the safety of the public and the rights of victims.

When members of the Ontario Board of Parole are making decisions about which offenders to release into our communities, we believe that public safety must be the overriding concern. They must, when considering whether to release an individual on to our streets, always be prepared to err on the side of caution.

We believe that parole board members must be qualified—by their background, their work experience or their contributions to the community, as well as by the training they receive—to make sound decisions.

That is why I wish to take a few moments today to talk about some of the recent improvements to the parole board, including the appointment of new members to the board and to announce a review of the board's mandate as a provincial agency.

Recent changes to the board's operation have come about as a result of the recommendations contained in the Stephenson inquest and the Wein report. Today, board members may no longer grant parole to a serious offender when key documents about the offender's criminal record, such as police reports, are not available. Without that crucial information, the paroling decision must be postponed or denied.

A 24-hour, on-call system for parole supervising officials has been established for issuing warrants of apprehension for parole violation.

My ministry is implementing a standard risk assessment tool to determine the level of risk presented by offenders being considered for release. This is one more mechanism to help guide parole board members and to ensure they make safe and responsible decisions before releasing offenders into the community.

The Ontario Board of Parole now has a procedure in place to review every case in which an individual commits a serious offence while out on parole.

These changes and others go some distance towards ensuring those parolees released are our best candidates for a successful and productive return to our communities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce the appointment of 34 new full- and part-time members to the Ontario Board of Parole. The expertise they will bring to their new responsibilities and their commitment to public safety will strengthen the board. These new appointments, made on the recommendations of the Premier, include four appointees with extensive backgrounds in the field of corrections and parole; 12 individuals with policing experience, including five former chiefs of police; two individuals with legal backgrounds;

a retired judge; and five men and women with business and management experience.

Among our new appointees to the board as part-time members are Richard Chaloner, a former Deputy Attorney General of Ontario; Pat FitzGerald, a retired senior judge, district court of Ontario; Gary Preston, former superintendent of the Rideau Correctional and Treatment Centre; Arthur Rice, former chief of police for Ottawa; Carolyn Harrison, an instructor in the law and security program and a former police officer for Peel region; and Ralph DeGroot, a retired RCMP officer with 34 years' experience, including a stint as the commanding officer of the federal commercial crime investigative program in Ontario.

I would like the members to take special note of one newly appointed part-time member of the parole board. Franco Fragomeni is a supervisor of psychological services at the Belleville General Hospital, who has worked extensively with young offenders and adults with behavioural disorders. He is the brother-in-law of the late Constable Joe MacDonald, who was shot October 7, 1993, during a routine traffic patrol in Sudbury.

Among our 10 reappointments are Elizabeth Kiddle, a social worker who has worked within corrections and family services, and Joe Seymour, executive director of the NeChee Friendship Centre in Kenora.

I would also like to mention the appointment of Ken Sandhu, chair of the Ontario Board of Parole. Mr Sandhu has been acting chair since last March. He is a dedicated professional who began as a correctional officer more than 20 years ago and who has just recently assumed the presidency of the Canadian Criminal Justice Association. In his capacity as acting chair, Mr Sandhu has tightened the criteria for release and improved the training that board members need to carry out their difficult task. I thank him for his efforts to date and for overseeing future enhancements.

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The measures we have taken today will begin to increase public confidence in this province's parole system. However, this cannot be done without examining all the issues surrounding parole. This brings me to my final announcement.

I have appointed a distinguished Ontarian, Mr Douglas Drinkwalter, to review the operations and mandate of the Ontario Board of Parole. He will make recommendations regarding the future delivery of parole services by the province of Ontario. His and my fundamental concern is with the continued safety and security of Ontario residents. Mr Drinkwalter is a former director of the Ontario Police College, a former chair of the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario and a former chair of the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services.

I have asked Mr Drinkwalter to report back to me by March 1, 1996.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): The Solicitor General never fails to amaze us over on this side of the House, because it was as late as September 16 that he was speculating in the newspaper that he would be getting rid of the Ontario parole board and allowing the

federal parole board to do all that work for us. I see the minister now has sort of seen the light, that it's very important that we have an Ontario perspective on those people who are in our charge for two years less a day in the Ontario provincial system, and that we bring, as a government and from this Legislature, the perspective as to who should be on parole and what are the standards that we want to see in this province. So it's a bit of an about-face, but there have been lots of surprises from this minister as of late.

I think it's important when looking at these appointments that we say to the minister that there's some good correctional background in a lot of these people. I think that's very important, though I would add to the minister that we in the opposition especially would like to see a greater use of the government agencies committee of this House so that we could start to review many of the appointments that this government has made.

Many of the people have credentials from the corrections side, but I think it should be the role of the loyal opposition to be looking at and giving some scrutiny to those positions, and especially the laypeople who are there. It's very important to make sure that these are not just plum patronage positions, but that they can pass the scrutiny of government agencies. So I would ask the minister that he do that and maybe even bring some of these through so we could have a look at them once we get the committees up and running.

It's kind of ironic, of course, that many of these people now who will be put on parole will not have any of the transition programs going into society, because of course the minister has closed the halfway homes in Ontario. So I can see why he's putting some stress now on the parole board, because of course these people now are going to have to directly go from a jail on to the street without those support programs that our halfway houses have provided for us across the province. We on this side believe those are very important and would certainly ask the minister to reconsider that situation.

The other thing I would say to the minister also is that as he starts to downsize in the ministry, he's going to be putting more and more pressure on the parole and probation officers there. I know, and he does too, that the caseloads are extremely high, and if we're to have that exacting and close supervision of people who have been put on parole by his board and his new appointees, he'd better make sure that the professionals in the field are adequately equipped and that they have a manageable caseload so they can do the job properly and so we don't get slipups and have those awful incidents happen that from time to time do happen.

I would send a warning to the minister: Don't gut that ministry. Make sure that your staff have the time and the equipment to do the proper job to make sure the supervision is there. Caseloads are high and you can't be continuing to cut those positions.

It's very important also, Minister, to make sure the parole board people have the proper information when they make those decisions. In the past we've seen, both at the federal and provincial levels, offenders being released without the parole board having the proper

information as to the severity of the offences and a complete record of the offender, and that's going to be very, very important.

I see the minister is concerned about some better communication and sending a current photograph to the police, as was not the case in the past. It's going to be very important so the police, when at their discretion they want to inform the community about who is going to be released in the community, have the proper information and a correct and current picture of the people.

I would also say to the minister that it would be very important to rush the implementation of the standard risk assessment tool that the ministry has developed. I think that's going to be very important to make sure that all these new board members are up to speed with all the current risk assessment tools that are available. It's very important, for them to make the very best decisions on behalf of us all, that they have the best information and the best training.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): The minister is quite right in his concern that people rebuild confidence in the probation and parole system in Ontario. As someone who worked for many years in the victim services area, I can tell the minister that there will be many who work within the community who will be very pleased to see the attention being paid by the ministry to the issue of parole.

I would point out to the minister that, of course, as he admits himself in his statement, many of the new changes that are being implemented or have been implemented were begun under our government in response to the Stephenson inquest. It's important for people to understand that inquest pointed out very serious problems with our parole system and the way in which information is received, and certainly the changes that have been made over the past number of months should give us all a great deal of confidence that that information is clear to those who are making decisions.

I'm very pleased that those who are on the parole board are going to have enhanced education. I hope that enhanced education includes education around the whole purpose of parole in the first place.

The purpose of parole is to give a time period within which people are under supervision so that they can work themselves back into the community, so that they have the optimum opportunity to avoid reoffending against the law and so that we, as citizens, have the utmost confidence that these people, as they are under that supervision, are in fact getting the kind of supports they require. I share my colleague the member for Timiskaming's concern that many of those services are beginning to be eroded and that places like the halfway houses provided some of those services.

I would say to the minister that, given his statements in the past about the rolling in of the Ontario parole board to the federal board, we are not naïve. We know that this year's time will give an opportunity for that to be examined, and we hope the minister will encourage Mr Drinkwalter to listen to all of those in the community—not just to the law and order types but to those who work with offenders and to those who work with victims'

groups—to try and ensure that our approach to this is not just a retributive approach but is a rehabilitative approach, is a balanced approach. Most offenders who are in our jails are people who have committed crimes which are certainly not in the high end of the serious scale. That doesn't mean some of them aren't dangerous, and I think we all are confident that the efforts of the board will be to protect public safety. But there needs to be balance and there needs to be understanding of that.

I don't see much here about improved education for the parole board around the kinds of conditions of parole, and that is something the victims' groups have cried out for for years. What are the conditions under which someone would be under parole? How is it going to keep victims of crime, particularly victims of domestic crime, safe during that period of parole? Because that is a very important issue and is one that has not done well in the past. It is very hard, when there are breaches of parole around contact with those victims, to ensure that there's an immediate response, and I think we need to work with all the law enforcement agencies to be sure that parole and that supervision ensure that safety of those victims, because there have been many, many problems with that in the past.

The appointments, I understand, are for a year, which also is a little hint that the minister is very clear about the fact that this is a real examination of the role of the parole board. I hope that as time goes on we will get information from other provinces about the pros and cons of rolling the Ontario parole board into the federal system and whether that will have the effect we want it to have of ensuring that there is a better sense of public safety as a result of the changes being made.

I certainly think many citizens do not know how hard members of the parole board have to work, the number of hours they're expected to give to this, and the difficult decisions they make. It's a good opportunity for us to thank them all, those who have served in the past and those who serve in the future, for the kind of work they're doing on our behalf.

1410

ORAL QUESTIONS

MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): In the absence of the Minister of Community and Social Services, I will direct my first question to the Premier.

The Premier may be aware that there is a growing sense of alarm and dismay among people across this province about the performance of the Minister of Community and Social Services. On Friday, as I'm sure the Premier is aware, the minister released a highly patronizing and, I might add, totally inadequate shopping list for people who are on welfare. On that very same day, it was reported that the minister, that same minister, had hired a former Brian Mulroney campaign crony named Jan Diamond to spruce up the minister's image.

Premier, do you find it acceptable for this minister to ask people on welfare to live on a \$90-a-month diet while he lives on an image diet that's about 10 times that

amount per day, and do you think this minister's problem is just an image problem?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I believe that Jan Diamond would find it interesting, being part of a consulting firm providing services to many businesses and all governments, to be referred to as a Mulroney crony or whatever was advanced. I'm sure she will find that quite a surprise.

Let me indicate to the leader of the official opposition that all of us from time to time, in answering questions, seek expertise in how to respond to the type of personal attacks that Mr Tsubouchi, the minister, has been subjected to. For newly elected politicians, this is a part of the process; it's very difficult for new members to adjust to. I would like to suggest that whatever assistance Mr Tsubouchi is getting, it's far short of the \$800,000 the leader undertook, at some expense, to get ready for the last campaign.

Mrs McLeod: I will, in the interests of dealing with the issue, let a totally erroneous and gratuitous comment pass, and suggest to the Premier that the consultant who was hired would not be nearly as surprised as the welfare recipients who had the benefit of the \$90-a-month food plan Mr Tsubouchi provided them with on Friday at the same time they learned he could be spending as much as \$1,200 a day to improve his image—as if there wasn't a substantial problem with this minister. That was the question to the Premier, because I suggest to you that whatever he does in terms of hiring an image consultant, he doesn't have just an image problem; he has a very real credibility problem.

You can hire a thousand image consultants if you care to, you can hide the minister away, as you did on Friday when he released his shopping list, you can even keep him away from the Legislature, but you can't change the basic fact that this minister does not understand what he is doing.

During the weekend we were all intrigued to hear the Premier musing about his days of eating bologna. I suggest that while the Premier may now have stopped eating bologna, his minister is still talking baloney. I want to ask the Premier, during your bologna-eating days, did you have enough money for detergent to wash the dishes? The Tsubouchi list doesn't. Did you have enough money for soap to wash your hands and toothpaste to brush your teeth? The Tsubouchi list leaves that off. Did you restrict yourself to two pieces of bread per day, with no butter? That's all the minister's shopping list allows. This list comes from Tsubouchiland, right along with the 69-cent cans of tuna and the dented tins of spaghetti and the advice about bartering for food.

Premier, does your minister have any connection at all with the realities that the poor people of this province face every day, and does he still merit your confidence in this critical portfolio?

Hon Mr Harris: Just to correct the record, Jan Diamond is not an image consultant. Perhaps the large bulk of the leader of the Liberal Party's \$800,000 makeover was for image consultants, but that is not Ms Diamond's role.

Quite frankly, the minister is out meeting with frontline workers in eastern Ontario, as he had planned to do and as he has been doing for a considerable period of time. The opposition kept asking for some assistance to help with their constituents. They didn't really want it, clearly.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): Come on, Allan, kick somebody out.

The Speaker: It will happen soon enough.

Hon Mr Harris: The minister, in light of the cancellation of the \$2-million program that used to be in the system to help people on welfare deal with managing money and budgeting and nutrition, a program cancelled by the former government, has asked his ministry that perhaps that cancellation was one program that ought not to have been cancelled and that we should be looking at providing this kind of help and assistance.

Whether the Leader of the Opposition agrees or not with the minister's attempt to help people break this cycle of dependency, to deal with a very, very difficult situation, the minister's quite a caring person and takes his job very seriously and believes he should do everything he can, even if some people will disagree with him.

Mrs McLeod: The Premier can try and dismiss the seriousness of the question with flippancy. He can try and dismiss the concern about the credibility of this minister. I think it is more difficult for the Premier to be able to dismiss the fact that this same minister has made a number of very serious mistakes, if in fact they can be called mistakes.

Premier, this minister said people could earn back the amount of your reduced benefits with no clawback, and this was not the case. We're still waiting for his commitment and indeed your commitment to fix the problem on this matter to be fulfilled.

This minister said he had not cut second-stage housing programs when clearly the cuts have been deep and widespread and those programs are now closing. He said there would be no cuts to seniors and the disabled, but he was caught, not once but twice, signing off on regulatory changes that would do just that. In fact, when he was caught making the first change in the regulations, you said you would not tolerate it a second time. Well, there was a second change in the regulations.

Premier, I suggest to you that every mistake this minister has made has very real significance for thousands of people, the very people that you yourself say you are committed to support: the seniors, the disabled, the victims of violence and those people who go out and get jobs so they can help break that cycle of dependency. I ask you, is this litany of errors what you consider to be an acceptable standard of conduct for one of your ministers?

Hon Mr Harris: I ask ministers to be honest, straightforward, do their best under very trying circumstances.

I want to tell you that over the last 10 years, the programs, the money we have not had, the spending, the

\$10-billion deficits, the lack of policing, of accountability for the dollars that were just thrown around—I don't know whose dollars they felt they were. The sad fact is they weren't even taxpayers' dollars; they were dollars that belong to somebody offshore who is now threatening not to lend them to us any longer or to call the notes.

I want to tell you this: Those hardworking people who are struggling, who are on welfare today, to whom we are attempting to give a hand up, I don't think agree with the premise of the question you are asking. None of the allegations you have put forward have affected the commitments we have made that they will be able to earn back the difference.

Yes, it's difficult and challenging to put it into regulation. Perhaps that's why you wouldn't do it for 10 years. But we are going to do the difficult things, we will take on the challenges of doing what we said we were going to do, and the minister, in the very difficult task we have given him to do, is doing that on behalf of all Ontarians, particularly those who have lost hope and who have been caught in the cycle of dependency. Those are the ones we are trying to help.

Mrs McLeod: I gather then that the Premier's answer is, yes, he does consider this an acceptable standard of conduct for ministers, so I may as well move on to a second question.

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CLOSURE OF HALFWAY HOUSES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I direct my question to the Solicitor General. There are reports that when the Durhamcrest halfway house closed its doors last week, four inmates were released from Whitby Jail back into the community despite the fact that they had up to two months left to serve on their sentences. People in the surrounding community were understandably upset to hear that this had occurred. We have been worried that these situations would inevitably occur as a result of your government's very hasty decision to close all of Ontario's halfway houses, and now they have begun.

I want to ask you, when you and other members of the cabinet sat around to decide where you were going to make your cuts, whether you knew that people would be released directly into the community before their sentences were served, and did you even think about what that might mean to the safety of people in communities across this province?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): Individuals who were resident in CRCs were deemed by the officials releasing them into CRCs to pose no significant risk to the public.

With respect to individuals residing in these facilities, as I've indicated, the average stay in a provincial institution is 72 days. A number of these individuals across the province were released early, but if you take a look at the individual cases, a few of them had two or three days left on their sentences, there were a number of extenuating circumstances, and I've been assured that any of the individuals released early in terms of the completion of their sentences pose no risk whatsoever.

Mrs McLeod: I'm more than a little surprised at the minister's answer, because these are individuals the judges thought had committed crimes serious enough to give them a sentence the judge clearly determined was appropriate, and it would seem to me that the minister is now setting his judgement and the judgement of his ministry staff over that of the courts. I'm more than a little surprised that this minister would offer that explanation.

I suggest to the minister that the decision to close the halfway houses never actually made sense, and what's happening now simply proves that.

You made the cut without ever considering what its impact would be or where in fact the residents of halfway houses would go. You didn't take time to find out if there was actually room for these offenders back in Ontario's jails. You didn't even take into consideration the fact that it costs twice as much to house these people in a jail as it does to house them in a halfway house. And now we have a situation where the offenders are being sent directly into the street instead of finishing their sentences.

Minister, when you made that hasty decision to close the halfway houses, you said these residents were being sent back to jail. Now we learn they're being released directly into the community, and I have to wonder whether that's happening because you've discovered it is more expensive to keep them in jail.

How many people that you said you were sending back to jail have in fact been released into the community? Are they being released because it is simply too expensive to keep them in jail, and have your cost-cutting exercises now taken precedence over community safety across this province?

Hon Mr Runciman: Some of the information the Leader of the Opposition just put on the record is quite inaccurate.

With regard to the Durhamcrest matter, the individuals were returned to the institution. Four were granted temporary absence, again with the requirement to report to the institution daily, maintain employment, do community work on weekends and attend counselling programs as appropriate.

The two offenders that people say were dangerous were on bail prior to the sentence. Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition said, the judges recommended immediate temporary absence when sentencing and correction officials no longer considered them as posing a risk to the community.

Mrs McLeod: If there were recommendations made that these individuals be released into the community without serving the balance of their sentences, it was because this minister and this government had taken away any other alternative, the alternative of the halfway houses.

I suggest again that that decision to close the halfway houses was made without thinking and without any kind of analysis; that you didn't think about the economic impact, the fact that people would have had to quit jobs to be sent back to jail, as you said you were going to do; you didn't think about the budget impact, the fact that it

costs more to keep people in jail; you didn't think about the safety impact, that people would indeed have to be released directly back into the streets.

Minister, I ask if you will not admit that this was just a mistake—call it a drafting error if you like—say that you have had time to reassess the impact of this decision, that you've made a mistake, and reverse your decision to close Ontario's halfway houses.

Hon Mr Runciman: The member's contribution today certainly hasn't persuaded me that we've made a mistake. Quite the contrary. We're saving in the neighbourhood of \$11 million a year. We're moving into electronic monitoring early in the new year. The system we've put in place in terms of the risk assessment tool, in terms of ensuring that the people released into the communities provide no risk to society I think is the way to go. In fact, as I've said on a number of occasions, this is going to provide a much safer process than the halfway house system did.

Again I have to mention that the member is trying to make a mountain out of a molehill here with respect to the fact that halfway houses represented a total of 398 beds, one half of 1% of the total offender population in Ontario on any given day.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): Mr Speaker, my breath is still recovering from the conversion in the demeanour and policy of the Solicitor General. I can hardly believe my ears, when I recall his attacks on us in the old days.

FOOD SHOPPING LIST

Mr Bob Rae (York South): My question is for the Premier. The Toronto Welfare Council, the predecessor of the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, has had a guide to food since the Great Depression. In 1939, they said—and the figures I'm giving you are all in 1994 dollars—that the food cost for a moderately active man would be \$75.97; in 1944, which was an update during the war, they said the cost would be \$113.19; and it's \$157.80 for today. Today, the North York department of public health also says that a single man, aged between 25 and 49, needs at least \$156 a

These figures are quite at odds with those put out by the Minister of Community and Social Services. I wonder if the Premier could explain why his minister seems to believe that a single person can live on a diet that's about \$70 less per month than those being set forth by people who are nutritionists and experts in the field.

month for an adequate diet.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The premise of the question is that we somehow have set a figure, and that is not at all what we have done or what the minister has done. We have set our welfare rates 10% higher than the average of the rest of the provinces. This would be probably 20% to 30% higher than somebody living in New Brunswick; to date, nobody has told me that people are starving in New Brunswick because of those rates.

Specifically, somebody asked a "What if?" situation—"What if" this? "What could you buy for that amount of money?"—and the minister said to his staff, if somebody

found themselves in that situation, which is the single person—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Tsubouchi said he had a budget.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): He said he did it on his own.

The Speaker: The member for Cochrane North is out of order and the member for Windsor-Riverside is also out of order. Could we have some order so I could hear what the answer is, please.

Hon Mr Harris: Somebody specifically asked about that amount of money. And the minister is a very thoughtful, caring individual. This amount was less than half the amount somebody would have after paying for shelter, so there was still plenty of money to go to \$157, plus clothing, plus other items. But somebody asked specifically about that and he asked one of his staff members, "Let's see what we can buy for that amount of money." Perhaps the opposition now is saying, "Silly minister, for caring." We happen to be proud of a minister who cares.

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Mr Rae: I don't think that's what any of us are saying. The issue isn't the size of anyone's heart. That's not what's at stake here. The issue is the wisdom of a government minister putting out a shopping list which is insulting and inadequate by any objective test. That's what's at stake here.

As the Premier is unwilling to answer the question with respect to the Toronto Welfare Council going back to 1939, perhaps he'd like to comment on the statement by Ann Armstrong, who's a nutritionist at the Lawrence Heights Community Health Centre, who said, in commenting on the list, "The dairy products list is okay, but the vegetable and fruit category is only enough for two weeks, following bare minimum nutritional requirements." She then goes on to say, "Ultimately, a person eating this type of diet loses interest in eating and the downward spiral begins."

I thought this was about giving a hand up, about providing people with enough sustenance so that they have the encouragement and the morale to carry on. Again I want to ask the Premier, how does he explain a minister of the crown putting out a food shopping list, sole single on GWA, for \$90.81, when it doesn't appear to meet the food requirements which nutritionists and others are saying is the bare minimum that would be expected? Why would a minister make a blunder as serious as that?

Hon Mr Harris: The minister's staff person who said, "Here's one thing we can buy for \$90," checked it with a nutritionist and checked around, said, "This doesn't look like a lot, but this is relatively balanced," and was part of what the minister was trying to do to make up for the \$2 million cut by your government in providing this type of nutrition counselling. That was what the minister had. When he indicated to the House a couple of weeks ago that he was working on this, was

concerned about this, cared about people, the opposition members demanded to see it—started with freedom of information.

Clearly, there's much more to be done. The minister has asked his officials to work with a consultant to develop additional information to try and provide assistance. If there are others who have information that could be beneficial, we would encourage them to assist people who are on a low, fixed income.

In the meantime, I have to tell you that it is not the intention and it is not the goal of our welfare policies to simply be, on average, the most generous in North America; we understand that's very difficult and very challenging. It is our goal, in setting that rate and in bringing in workfare programs and in reducing dramatically the amount of money that's clawed back when people work, to encourage them to work and to get jobs to help supplement the income. In the case of a single person, as you're all referring to, this is about five hours a week at a minimum-wage job. We are asking people and the community and all of those to assist with those jobs.

Mr Rae: The Premier's minister, in answer to a question from me, quite unsolicited by me—I did not ask for this list; I didn't ask for the budget—said these words: "I had some research done to indicate how and whether or not someone who is a sole single on benefits or a single parent with a child..." and then goes on to say, "We've actually provided a budget here.... I have it here in this binder. I'd be willing to share this with the leader of the third party." Three weeks later, I got the list. I understand, from the Globe and Mail on the weekend, that in fact it's a different list from the one he had in his binder on that day, so I don't have the list he had in his binder on the day he offered it to me.

I'd like to ask the Premier, will you produce the diet which the minister said he had in his binder on that day, October 3? And is the Premier personally satisfied that the food shopping list provided by the minister for \$90.81 is nutritionally adequate for the people of this province?

Hon Mr Harris: The only list I have is the one that was released on Friday. If there is another list, we're prepared to ask the minister. I'm sure that there were drafts that they were working on, trying to come up with it.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Harris: I know it's difficult for the member to hear with his members talking, but I'll do my best. Clearly, I said on the weekend that this is not a diet that I personally would want to live on. If I was faced with this, I would want to seek a job, try to get a little extra money, try to do other things.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Harris: The members ask where. I was sent this by a concerned person who said, "You know, I took a two-hour walk down Yonge Street" on a particular date, a couple of weeks ago, "and I had my camera with me and I saw, unbelievably, over 48 job opportunities," and he sent me a picture of each one, where they are. This was in two hours: "Wanted: Full- or Part-time

Salesperson"; "Join Our Team"; "Manager"; "Manager Trainee"; "Full-time Salesperson"; "Accepting Résumés"; "Please Work Here."

The Speaker: Would the Premier wrap up his answer, please.

Hon Mr Harris: "We're Hiring Full-time, Part-time." So my advice would be not to try to exist on the minimum, although many people are able to do that.

The Speaker: The question's been answered.

Hon Mr Harris: Many in other provinces are doing it on far less than we're asking our people to do it on. My advice and suggestion, and I hope all of you are doing the same—

The Speaker: Time, time.

Hon Mr Harris: —that you are truly trying to assist people—

The Speaker: Would the Premier take his seat, please. The question has been answered.

New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Rae: I want to come back to this issue because I think the Premier is skirting a couple of fairly basic issues in a major way. The minister told us that he was going to provide us with a budget for a single person and also a single person with a child.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): And that he had it there.

Mr Rae: And that he had it in his binder. He hasn't done that. He's given us a new document which has been doctored and, apparently, doctored inadequately, because other nutritionists are telling us even this document is inadequate.

I'm thinking now of the children who are reliant on perhaps single parents for their food. I'm very concerned that the same minister who thinks that it's okay to live on 90 bucks a month for food for a single person has also got some other mythic figure and mythic budget, not just for themselves but for kids.

Is the Premier advising the children of single parents that they should live on a diet of bologna and beans until they're 18 years old? Is that the suggestion that the Premier's making?

Hon Mr Harris: The minister's not giving advice to children at all. The minister is very concerned, of course, about children and a future and a hope and opportunity. 1440

The minister was, as was I and our cabinet and our party when we took office, faced with this situation. We were faced with the fact that over the last 10 years, two successive governments spent a total of \$40 billion on welfare. We looked at those programs that those \$40 billion were spent on—dollars we didn't have, by the way; borrowed dollars—we looked at those dollars and said, after spending \$40 billion, we took welfare rates 10 years ago, 10% on average higher than the rest of Canada to 30% to 35% higher.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Cochrane South, come to order.

Hon Mr Harris: What did we accomplish? More food banks; more people going without jobs; more unemployed; three times the number of people on welfare; the budget up four times. So we asked ourselves, if we carry on this way we're going to have even more people on welfare and even more hungry and even fewer jobs if we keep on borrowing money to do it.

So the minister, the cabinet, this government are making fundamental changes: changing welfare to give children an opportunity, a future, some hope—something that was lacking in the last five years.

Mr Rae: The question was about food and children and the adequacy of the information provided by the minister, just to remind the House that was the question. I'd like to return to that question because I haven't heard the beginning of an answer.

On October 3, 1995, the minister said that he had a budget for a single parent with a child as well as for a single person. He has provided us with neither. He has provided us with a subsequent document which has even now been shown to be totally inadequate. I want to ask the Premier, will he produce for us today the budget that the minister said he had for a single parent with a child in the province of Ontario on October 3, 1995? Will you please produce that document today?

Hon Mr Harris: I have no documents that deal with any statements made on October 3. I know the minister was working on, and continues to work on, trying to provide nutritional advice and—

Mr Cooke: That's not what he said.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Harris: The minister, I believe, has responded to that. If there are other questions for him specifically, then that's fine.

What I can say to the leader of the New Democratic Party is this: His policies for children were an unmitigated, disastrous failure, condemning more and more and more an increasing number of children to a cycle of dependency that is one of the cruellest things that could ever be exacted upon children anywhere in this great province of Ontario, in this great country of Canada. That's not even to talk about the future hope for jobs and opportunity as the finances of this province have been pushed close to Third World country status.

I want to tell you we're making changes to bring this province back, to bring hope and opportunity back. Why are we doing it? I'm going to tell you why we're doing it. We're doing it for our children.

Mr Rae: Just because the Premier is advising people to live on a diet of bologna doesn't mean he has to serve it to us in the Legislature. No matter how thick you cut it, my friends, that's what's being served here.

The Premier and his government are doing something for the children of the wealthier people in this province. They're doing nothing for the children of those who are the most vulnerable in this province. The record will show it and the history will show it. But let me come back.

Premier, can you please tell us why you are unwilling to come forward with the diet which the minister said he had in his binder on October 3, 1995, which was supposed to prove how children of people who are on social assistance were going to be able to get by, when the only thing the minister has produced is for a single person, and even that document has been proven to be totally, totally inadequate by any standard? Can you tell us why you're so unwilling to come forward with that document today?

Hon Mr Harris: You know, unlike the way the government has operated for the past 10 years, we've come forward with every document we have, with information, with work in progress. This has been one of the most open governments, one of the most predictable governments.

A year in advance of the election we published, "Here's what we would like to do if you give us your trust to elect us."

Interjections.

The Speaker: I wonder if the members would mind coming to order so that we can hear the answer to the question, please.

Hon Mr Harris: We put out a year in advance of an election, saying: "Elect us. This is the direction we would like to go in." We campaigned on what we would like to do if the people entrusted us to make changes. We simply asked the people: "Are you happy with the status quo? Are you happy with 1.3 million on welfare? Are you happy with half a million people unemployed?" And the people of Ontario said: "No. We must make changes. We must change the spending dollars we don't have and we must turn welfare into workfare and into a hand up and break the cycle of dependency."

It's not easy. It's not easy making changes, and it is very difficult for people who are on welfare. We understand that. We appreciate that. We are sympathetic to that

The Speaker: Wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Harris: We have a lot of empathy for those people, and we are going to do everything we can to truly give them a hand up and break that cycle of dependency.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. As you may have learned by now, this weekend brought a major snowstorm to northern Ontario. It also very tragically brought unnecessary fatalities to northern roads.

According to a police report, slippery, snow-covered roads were to blame in an accident that caused the deaths of three people and injured five others near Sioux Lookout. In addition, conditions were so bad near Ignace that dozens of transports were stuck on a hill with no sanders in sight.

Minister, it's happened. There have already been deaths this year due to road conditions. Your ministry has announced cuts that will see maintenance to winter roads downgraded. Nowhere will these cuts be more acutely felt than in northern Ontario, although they affect the entire province.

Minister, you must assure this House and you must assure this House today, and the people of this province, that you will make no further reductions in winter road maintenance and that you will reverse the cuts that you have announced. Will you please commit to that now?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): My deepest sympathies are with the families and the victims of this tragedy. I'm disappointed that the honourable member would blame government reductions for what is clearly a tragic accident.

It insults the families of the people involved for you to make those allegations. The reductions in winter maintenance do not come into effect until November 13. This was a tragedy, certainly with no fault on the proposed cuts that you're referring to.

Mr Gravelle: It's astonishing that the minister would just kind of slide away from this as he has all the time on this issue. There's no question you cannot simply walk away on this one. You cannot play with safety due to budget cuts. These things are happening now. You've got to talk to your colleague, your desk mate, the Minister of Education and Training, who was just in Sault Ste Marie this past weekend, and he was talking to northern board of education officials who were very concerned about those cuts as well.

You simply have an opportunity now to do the right thing and to see that before more tragic deaths occur, you rescind these cuts to winter road maintenance now. This issue will not go away, Mr Minister. You've got to deal with it now. Please commit to that today.

Hon Mr Palladini: I'm always sad when there is an accident and it takes a fatality. It really does make me sad. Again, I would like to say it is very unfair for the honourable member to put the blame for this tragedy on this government. Again I would like to say that we are committed to maintaining the standards of our roads in a safety environment, and I just will not accept the member's blaming this government for that terrible tragedy. 1450

MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): My question is to the Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Community and Social Services, and I'd like to come back to the question that's been raised earlier about the cost of the consultant that the Minister of Community and Social Services has hired to improve his image.

I'd like to ask the Premier, does he think it's appropriate for the taxpayers of this province to be spending \$1,200 a day, so one day's cost of this consultant is equal to 13 months of food under the budget that the minister tabled at the end of last week? Is that fair in the province? Is that a fair expenditure of funds, all of which are borrowed funds? That would be \$1,200 a day, \$6,000 a week, or \$300,000 a year. Is that an expenditure which this Premier endorses?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): As I indicated before, the person in question actually is not an image consultant but I understand has been retained on the minister's staff on a contract as opposed to staffing up to

the levels that the former New Democratic Party had. What I think you will find is that ministry by ministry, category by category, Premier to Premier, we have far less staff, are spending far less money. Yes, in some cases, when you staff very lean and mean, and from time to time you need communications advice or you need advice on setting up your ministry and staffing and whatnot—these are the kinds of services that are provided—from time to time then you bring somebody in for a short period of time instead of carrying them on your payroll for five years.

I want to say to the member, with all due respect, the minister, like all our ministers—(a) there are fewer of them, and (b) they are spending far fewer dollars on personal staff than did the former government.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question has been answered.

Mr Cooke: Inside of about 48 hours, the Premier says to the poor people of this province, "Eat bologna and beans," and to the Minister of Community and Social Services, "Blow the taxpayers' money at 1,200 bucks a day, \$6,000 a week or \$300,000 a year," because you haven't got it and can't communicate with the public, so the taxpayers will pay for a communications consultant.

I'd like to ask the Premier, if the Minister of Community and Social Services needs to be trained or retrained, how long is it going to take the Premier to understand that maybe this person shouldn't be in cabinet?

Hon Mr Harris: What I have directed the Minister of Community and Social Services to do, as I have directed all cabinet ministers to do, is: "Spend far fewer dollars than did your predecessors on personal and political staff and on consultants, add up that budget and let's just make sure that we make the appropriate savings there that should be made."

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): But it's okay to spend money for an image consultant for the minister. Was it the consultant who said, "Don't send out the original budget"? Is that where the advice came from, Mike?

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Lankin: "Let them eat bologna; let them eat tuna," but we can spend bucks on a consultant for the minister because he is making our government look—

The Speaker: Order. Would the member for Beaches-Woodbine please come to order.

Hon Mr Harris: I would say to the member for Beaches-Woodbine and to all the members in the New Democratic Party that had you controlled your spending in your ministers' offices half as well as we are doing, and had that been extended to the finances of the province of Ontario, we wouldn't have inherited a \$10.5-billion deficit.

EXPENDITURE REDUCTIONS

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Minister, recent media reports would indicate that the cuts in your ministry were very small, less than 2%; some \$8.5 million from a ministry of \$589 million. When this government is making such deep

spending cuts, would you explain to this Legislature why the cuts in your ministry were so small?

Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): I'd like to say that, first of all, that is a good question. I should say, relatively speaking it's a good question. I want to thank the honourable member for Northumberland and I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the amount of expenditure reductions within my ministry.

When this government came to office it was confronted with a fiscal mess, and it was a mess created after 10 years of Liberal and NDP waste, abuse and mismanagement. In order to help meet the challenges this government faces, my ministry has reduced its budget by well over \$19 million. We literally cut or froze every single program penny that had not already been spent or legally committed by the previous government. Our savings would have been even greater had the previous government not already spent the money.

In the Common Sense Revolution we vowed to reduce grants to business by at least \$200 million annually. That goal will be met by this government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. Will the minister take his seat, please. Do you have a supplementary question?

Mr Galt: In light of the significant cuts that this ministry has experienced and will be cutting in the future, what plans do you have for job creation here in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Saunderson: That's another good question, and I'm pleased to answer it. I can assure the member that I view these spending reductions as an opportunity to work with job creators in smarter and more strategic ways. We'll be concentrating on improving the business climate, we'll be eliminating barriers to growth created by previous governments, we'll be making the most efficient use of government resources and we will be marketing Ontario here and abroad and promoting sector development. Clearly, we can't keep operating business assistance in the way it was done before.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Wrap up your answer.

Hon Mr Saunderson: We won't provide subsidies that are selective and that give some firms or businesses an unfair advantage over their competitors. We won't prop up unviable businesses or allow them to depend on long-term government support.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South): My question is for the Premier. Premier, many Ontarians are concerned about where your government's priorities lie relating to the environment, and here's why.

There's not a single reference to the environment in your Common Sense Revolution. To date, your government has eliminated three environmental advisory committees; you've cut funding now for the blue box program; you've told the people of Toronto they could not pass a clean air bylaw; and finally, last week we heard

musings from your Minister of Environment and Energy about exempting dumps from the environmental assessment process.

I found this particularly surprising, Premier, in light of the fact that in this House, on December 4, 1990, you supported a motion which read in part as follows: "No new waste disposal sites will be designated within the province without the benefit of full and public hearings under the Environmental Assessment Act."

My question, Premier: Do you still, today, believe that Ontario's dumps ought to be the subject of full and public hearings under the Environmental Assessment Act?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Yes, I do.

Mr McGuinty: Now that the Premier is being so agreeable I'll move forward. I want to draw the Premier's attention to something else to which he agreed, found within the same resolution on December 4, 1990, in this House, and I quote, "No region can transport its waste to another municipality in the province without a resolution of the recipient municipality indicating that it is a 'willing host' for such waste."

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Premier, you will no doubt be aware that there is a proposed dump site in the community of Flamborough, which I had the opportunity to visit late last week. An environmental assessment hearing was held there. It lasted 140 days and cost more than \$15 million. The upshot is that the Environmental Assessment Board concluded that it would be unsafe to locate the dump there. The affected communities of Flamborough, Dundas and the regional municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth are united in their opposition to the dump and these communities are clearly not willing hosts.

Your cabinet, as you will recognize, is now set to reconsider and possibly overturn the decision of the Environmental Assessment Board. My question is quite simply this: The people of Flamborough, Dundas and Hamilton-Wentworth want to know why, Premier, you are considering overturning an Environmental Assessment Board decision and locating a dump in their community when you are fully aware of their opposition to it and when you have clearly indicated in the past that you will not permit such a thing to happen.

Hon Mr Harris: I want to say very clearly to the member that the last time a government decided to skip full environmental assessments, skip the wishes of the people, skip this whole process, short-circuit everything, was when his party was in power and they proceeded to try to force mega-dumps on the people in and around Metropolitan Toronto without a full environmental assessment.

I want to say something: In spite of the fact that we felt the previous government was proceeding in error with their mega-dump proposal, at least they were having full environmental assessment, not trying to short-circuit the process, not going without any full environmental assessment, picking a site, saying: "This is our Liberal site. This is where we're going to put the garbage." I want to tell you that we made a decision then and there that that was not the role of the government—not to

short-circuit the process, not to do that. And the former government, we think, made a few mistakes but at least they did not violate that principle, as was done by the Liberal Party.

With respect to the specific site, I'm actually not aware of the specific site, but if there has been a request, a petition to cabinet, then cabinet must receive that petition and in a judicial way rule on it. If the member is suggesting that cabinet should say, "Even though people have an appeal, we should throw it out or ignore it or not consider it," then I don't think he's acting very responsibly.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, in keeping with your government's attack on children, your government is putting school bus safety at risk by cutting the allocation of winter road clearing.

The Toronto Star has reported that the Minister of Education met with representatives of northern Ontario school boards over the weekend and he told them that in order to ensure safety in the north for children travelling on school buses, his government would make deeper cuts to the road clearing in the south. Apparently, the minister said, "We're cognizant of what the road conditions in northern Ontario are like."

I'd like to ask the minister, does that mean that he, as the Minister of Education, is prepared to sacrifice the safety of children in the southern part of this province in order to make it whole through a meeting in the north at a media scrum?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): In answer to the honourable member's question, I want to assure the honourable member that no one in this government will do anything to put the safety of children in this province at risk.

Mrs Boyd: We're very puzzled then at what the minister himself is reported to have said to the meeting in northern Ontario. The minister has made public assurances that he will take care of the children in the north and he told reporters that deeper cuts could be made in southern Ontario to compensate for the needs of the north.

I represent southwestern Ontario and I want the minister to remember what it's like in the snow belt. The children of Huron and Grey and Bruce and Perth and Oxford counties, Middlesex county, just to name a few of the examples where winter road conditions are an ongoing concern, are they to be sacrificed so that you can make that promise to the parents of northern Ontario children?

This is a real problem, so I have a question for the minister. What's he going to tell the parents and the school boards and the children in southern Ontario when he meets with them? Because I can assure him this will be a question that they will have.

Hon Mr Snobelen: In answer to the honourable member's question, my response to the parents of school children in the southern part of Ontario, the northern part of Ontario, the eastern part of Ontario, the western part of Ontario would be the same: that this government has

a concern for the wellbeing and the safety of school children across the province—an equal concern, honourable member.

4-H MOVEMENT

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): Mr Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. I know that you've got a big job to do.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The main goal in 4-H is developing youth. Their motto is "Learn to do by doing." In 1994 in the province of Ontario there were 1,400 members in 4-H work. The average age of these members was 13 years old. Both urban and rural people and children benefit from the practical experience gained through the participation of 4-H.

Considering the valuable contribution that the Ontario 4-H programs make to developing youth, what is the minister going to do to support them?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): The 4-H movement in Ontario was 80 years old this year, and I was very pleased to be in Brampton to celebrate with our 4-H members and the many volunteers that operate 4-H. I want to congratulate them again and wish them a happy 80th birthday.

OMAFRA has been and continues to be highly supportive of the 4-H program along with the many volunteers—the parents of many of these 4-H members. I know that within these chambers many people who come from rural Ontario went through the 4-H movement and it's made them better people because of it. We are supportive of 4-H in Ontario.

Mr Rollins: What is the minister's future plan to promote the 4-H organizations in Ontario?

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Give them a little money.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: The Leader of the Opposition says, "Give them a little money." If they wouldn't have left the cupboard so bare, it would have been a lot easier to find them some money.

We're presently renegotiating the three-year agreement with the 4-H council, and that will be done for 1996-97. The 4-H council has indicated that they wish to be more responsible and will be providing more volunteers to support the 4-H movement. Yes, volunteers are very important in the province of Ontario and we have them in rural Ontario.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The government's commitment to a balanced budget is quickly falling apart. As a result, the government is forcing the hand of municipalities, content to let municipalities make the tough decisions such as cutting essential services like policing, fire departments and ambulatory services, and, yes, raising business and property taxes.

This government has promised to help small business in the province. However, the proposed spending cuts, in particular cuts in municipal transfers, are going to leave municipalities with a serious shortfall in revenues. The end result of this decision will be that municipalities, in order to sustain essential services such as policing, will have to raise business and property taxes to cover this particular shortfall.

1510

Could the minister today in the House give assurances that business, especially small business, won't bear the brunt of government cutbacks by simply absorbing the shortfall in revenues by way of increased property taxes within municipal jurisdictions?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): In answer to the member's question, I'd like to say that this government is looking forward to working with municipalities, contrary to what they faced in the past. It's our intention to give the municipalities autonomy, with that responsibility to help make their own decisions so that they can implement the programs that they feel are most important to their municipalities. We believe that cooperation is the way you go, not confrontation. We've been working with all of the municipalities, we'll continue to work with the municipalities and we'll keep on going.

Interjection: Cut first, ask questions later.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Supplementary.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Leach: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear the comment. But I have now.

Mr Sergio: Ted Mallett, of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, has said that, "Higher property taxes would be disastrous. They will destroy jobs, income and create more poverty," and, I add, inequities.

The average increase in property taxes is going to be as high as \$1,000 per every \$1,000 in property value. May I say that this kind of help small business can do without.

It was not long ago when the now Premier was saying to the people of Ontario that the buck stops here, that we have to be responsible for our own actions, that we only have one taxpayer and that we must stop unloading on to another level of government.

My question is simple: Can the government guarantee that the shortfall in revenue the municipalities will face will not result in increased property taxes?

Hon Mr Leach: The decision whether to raise taxes or not raise property taxes rests with the municipality.

The Speaker: The member for Mississauga South on a point of privilege.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGE

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: My point of privilege is significant to every member in this House, and it's the question of the use of the cameras that are in the press gallery.

Apparently, at least two of our Toronto television stations, Global and City, last week filmed material on my desk and on my colleague the member for Wellington's desk as well. In my case the material that they

filmed happened to be on top of a confidential report from the Attorney General's office which I was in the process of reading.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Mrs Marland: I say to all members in the House, I think you should share this concern, because there would be times when you wouldn't want material on your desk filmed either. So, Mr Speaker, I would—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs Marland: This is a very serious matter, Mr Speaker, and I would appreciate perhaps if you reviewed those tapes and made a decision as to whether there should be some penalty. I know in other legislatures that cameras have been removed by the offending stations that were responsible for them for at least a week or 10 days of filming. If we cannot bring our work into this House—all of us, every one of us in this House has tremendous work schedules, and we are dependent on being able to do some of that work in this House, so I plead for your consideration to review those tapes and decide whether in fact not only my privileges have been breached as a member, but possibly someone else in the future.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On the point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I appreciate what the member has said and the concern she has expressed. I would be concerned that we continue to restrict information that might be available.

We have now discussion of permanent barriers outside for people so they can't demonstrate. We have more police officers around in SWAT gear around the Legislature.

I'm not saying that there isn't a problem that the government sees, and it has to deal with it sometimes, but I just worry that every time we do something like this, we keep restricting the freedom of information that we have available out there.

I think the member is quite appropriate in bringing forward her concerns about documents that she has on her desk and their availability to the public. As a member, she certainly is entitled to do that. I only look at it in the context of everything else that seems to be happening out there. We seem to be tightening the screws on those who want to get information about what happens in this chamber and other places.

I simply place that caution before you when you're dealing with this matter.

The Speaker: The same point of privilege, the member for Windsor-Riverside.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I'd like to join with the House leader of the official opposition in saying that while I understand the concerns of the member, I also would not want the Speaker to think that there is some black and white answer to this particular problem.

It seems that some of the experiences that we've had around here recently have resulted in some rather simplistic responses to security problems, and I would not want

to see anyone leaving this chamber thinking that anybody has the authority to implement sanctions against members of the gallery. They have acted in this way in the past, and if there are concerns, I think the appropriate thing to do would be for the Speaker to speak with the president of the press gallery and see if this issue could be dealt with in a way that the gallery enforce rules on itself and not us in restricting access to the gallery, to this place.

The Speaker: I want to thank the honourable members, the member for Mississauga South and others, for bringing this to my attention. I'll look at it and find if there is a policy and I'll report back.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I think I see a previous member in the gallery. Is that Dan Waters from Muskoka-Georgian Bay with us today?

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I move that this House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1517 to 1547.

The Speaker: Will the members take their seats, please.

All those in favour of Mr Sterling's motion will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 64; the nays 29.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LABOUR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL ET L'EMPLOI

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations / Projet de loi 7, Loi visant à rétablir l'équilibre et la stabilité dans les relations de travail et à promouvoir la prospérité économique et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois en ce qui concerne les relations de travail.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): As I was saying with regard to Bill 7—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Once again, I rise on a point of order with respect to section 106 of the standing orders, which states, and I quote:

"Within the first 10 sessional days following the commencement of each session in a Parliament the membership of the following standing committees shall be appointed for the duration of the session."

Mr Speaker, I'm asking you to follow on what I believe your ruling was last week, that at some point you would be stepping in. The standing orders must be adhered to in this place and the standing committees must be established. The only reason the government's not calling the motion is because, even though it is a motion that is debatable in the House—it's a substantive motion—the government does not want debate on the motion to establish the standing committees.

We believe in this caucus that we have a right to debate that motion and that the government has an obligation to follow the standing orders and call that motion so that the standing committees of the assembly are established. I'm asking you, Mr Speaker, to intervene to see that that happens immediately.

Hon Mr Sterling: On the point of order, Mr Speaker: I think this government has shown good faith in trying to put forward that particular motion. We brought forward the motion on the 10th sessional day to have it passed and encountered unreasonable opposition from the third party. Then we allowed debate on it on two other occasions.

The leader of the third party saw fit to take an hour and a half to presumably talk about which members should be on which committee, a precedent which I have never seen in this Legislature heretofore in the last 18 years that I have been in these chambers.

We would love to appoint the committees of this Legislature, but we are also obligated to the people of Ontario to bring forward important legislation like Bill 7. I know the amount of time that the opposition has perhaps you might want to characterize it as taken up on this particular motion as to which particular member should be on which committee, and the delays by asking for adjournment votes during the routine proceedings have far outstripped the debate we have had on Bill 7. We must proceed with Bill 7. This was promised to the electorate and that's what we're going to do.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: It seems to me that the member for Carleton is asking you to pass judgement on what should be debated and what shouldn't be debated. The point of order is that the rules require, and the language is clear, that "the following standing committees shall be appointed for the duration of the session."

You ruled last week that the government should have some time and some opportunity to discuss with members of the two opposition parties how this would be done. That has not proceeded.

The only other time the government has tried to do this was that while debate was happening on another bill, the member for Carleton rose in his place and asked again for unanimous consent.

If we're going to work in this place, instead of on an orderly basis, by always asking for unanimous consent, this place will get bogged down.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, it seems to me that the member for Carleton asking you to pass some sort of subjective judgement on how long a member can speak on a debatable motion, a substantive motion, is really not in keeping with the points of order. If one speaker arises and addresses the House on the issue, stays on the topic, it seems to me that is perfectly in keeping with the rules and the orders of this place.

So I come back to rule 106. It's very clear: "...the membership of the following standing committees shall be appointed for the duration of the session," within the first 10 sessional days. It seems to us that the government has not attempted to do that, and where they've attempted to do it, it's been a rather lackadaisical and haphazard attempt at most.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On the point of order, Mr Speaker: From the point of view of our party, we would be delighted to—

Interjections.

Mr Bradley: Oh, you would like to go on forever, would you? We'll see about that. So far we've attempted to be, I think, quite reasonable—so far. But it happens sometimes that government backbenchers start getting smart all the time and know all these things and start causing problems simply by their interventions.

Putting that aside, I am simply—as are, I'm sure, the government House leader and the New Democratic Party—eager to see the committees sit. One of the important things for all members of the House, regardless of which side they sit on, is the committee work that has to be done, and I would hope that a way could be found to accommodate the wishes of the three parties so we can have those committees in session. One of the reasons we've talked about today, Mr Speaker, and I know it's of great interest to you, is so the Legislative Assembly committee, for instance, could sit to deal with matters of security so that the onus isn't placed entirely on you or on any individual servant of this House when it comes to matters of security. So we would be delighted to see the motion brought forward and to have the committee struck at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I thank the honourable members for bringing it to my attention. There is one thing that I want to see, and that is that the rules of this House are adhered to. I ruled on it last week. I thought I made the ruling clearly. However, I'd be pleased to take another look at it and report back.

Hon Mr Sterling: As I started to say about Bill 7, the repeal of Bill 40 was made absolutely clear to the electorate of Ontario during the last election, which elected this party on June 8. Therefore, for the House now to stall with regard to getting on with this debate I think does nothing for either side which wants to enter into this particular debate. It's my belief that we would be much better off spending our time talking about Bill 7, talking about our views on Bill 7, than calling for adjournments of the House, as the third party has done on a number of occasions.

The fact of the matter is that we have the mandate to carry the repeal of Bill 40 through, and I think we owe

it to the Ontario public to do so. I fully support the Minister of Labour in terms of Bill 7, and I'm pleased as well that we're repealing Bill 91, which deals with the agricultural community. I know the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs would at this time like to put forward his comments with regard to Bill 7.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I rise for a few moments to participate, to speak on the key points of Bill 7 as they will touch rural and agricultural Ontario.

Agriculture is a very unique industry. It produces food that looks after us all here in Ontario, along with major, major exports—over \$4 billion of exports annually. It's a business that, in my very humble opinion, is even more important than the car industry, and the car industry is very important to this province.

Agriculture, in its uniqueness, cannot and should not come under any sort of labour legislation. Ontario labour is currently experiencing a major period of transition and restructuring. As we travelled the province prior to the election, I had the honour of being the co-chair of a report known as the rural economic development report. I must tell you that there are no surprises between this report and a number of others and the one known as the Common Sense Revolution.

Those who were surprised by what came forth in the speech from the throne really had better look at this government again, because there were no surprises. It is important that the people of Ontario understand that with the type of spending that was occurring, \$10 billion a year more than was being taken in by the government, the total debt in the last 10 years under a Liberal and NDP government went from \$30 billion to almost \$100 billion. That is almost more money than anyone can even imagine and fathom.

1600

The interest now on \$9 billion a year, or very nearly \$9 billion a year, is more than half of what it takes to run our very cherished health care services in this province. Twenty years ago, under a Bill Davis government, the cost of interest now was basically what it cost to run the government of Ontario. If that does not give you some sort of scale to work on, I don't think any part of the debate will convince you.

It is a very, very important industry, to go back to the industry of agriculture, and I'm very proud to be a part of it and to be there to support and assist agriculture as we move through some global harmonization where indeed we will have to compete on a global basis. When we inject labour relations into agriculture, anything that disrupts the harvesting or the handling of a food crop I believe should not be tolerated and will not be tolerated by this government, and we are living up to exactly what we said.

I stood in my place on the opposition side of the House when Bill 91 came in and said it was simply an addendum to Bill 40, and should we ever have the privilege and opportunity of being the government, that would be one of the first bills to go.

I'm pleased to see that my Liberal colleagues support the repeal of Bill 91, although I was quite intrigued to see that they support Bill 40, which was not quite the message I was getting prior to the election. Be that as it may, Liberals have been known to be flexible from time to time and I guess that is a bit of their flexibility again. They're showing the spring they have—spring and fall; remember, after spring comes fall, and those things do sometimes happen.

Our government is very, very adamant about making sure that Ontario agriculture not only survives but can operate at a cost that is competitive—

Mr Bradley: Is that like Sunday shopping, Noble? What's your position on Sunday shopping?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: The member for St Catharines should know this. Competitiveness in this world is what it's all about; that's what survival's all about. That is why this Legislature has moved very quickly to put back in place the labour laws that—well, we're told we'll be challenged. I was very interested in reading in the most recent edition of Farm and Country, "Union leaders, including the United Food and Commercial Workers' Walter Lumsden, say they'll challenge new labour law." Challenge they may; however, we are adamant in having agriculture exempt, as it was previously, from the labour law of this province.

We are recommending in Bill 7 and will explain as thoroughly as we can and as is possible the exemption from collective bargaining to include "farming in all its branches, including dairying, beekeeping, aquaculture, the raising of livestock including non-traditional livestock, furbearing animals and poultry, the production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of agricultural commodities, including eggs, maple products, mushrooms and tobacco, and any practices performed as an integral part of an agricultural operation." I believe, regardless of what Mr Lumsden says, that the exemption of agriculture will indeed occur, as it should and as it had for many years.

I see the member for St Catharines leaving the chamber for a moment. He understands, coming from the tender fruit area of Ontario, the importance of having the job done on time. I know he understands that; he's been around here for a long time. I'm bringing him back to his seat.

Bill 91 increased the cost of labour. As we travelled the province prior to the election, farmers told us, almost to the last one, that indeed Bill 91 and Bill 40 must go in order for them to be competitive, that due to its uniqueness, agriculture must be exempt from industrial-style collective bargaining.

Interestingly, I received several letters, one of them from Highline Produce Ltd—they produce mushrooms—and another from Kingsville Mushroom Farms Inc. My colleague across the way would also understand that. I'll just quote a line or two. It's addressed to me, and it says:

"The quick response of your government to return sanity to agriculture by repealing the previous government's labour legislation will serve to provide great confidence in the future of the mushroom sector of agriculture in Ontario." I believe this echoes the sentiments of basically all food producers in the province of Ontario.

In developing Bill 7, we met with the farm groups, including the Labour Issues Coordinating Committee, a network of 14 major farm groups that dealt with the farm labour issue as the previous government came forth with Bill 91. Committee members told us they supported the repeal of 91 and that they wanted a stronger agricultural exemption, previously present in the Labour Relations Act that was in place prior to the advent of Bill 40 and Bill 91.

We have responded. In Bill 7, not only is agriculture exempt from collective bargaining but we have included a comprehensive definition of "agriculture."

The broad definition will provide clear direction to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in agricultural disputes and ensure that all types of agricultural operations are protected by the exclusion from the Labour Relations Act.

It will also provide our Ontario farmers with the clarity and direction they've been looking for to help them guarantee in the future that they will not have to deal with a mediator or a negotiator. Bill 91 prevented lockouts and prevented strikes, so it created a very difficult situation, particularly when negotiations or communications broke down between an employer and an employee. Farm produce has to be harvested when ready, and whenever communications would break down, you can't lock out, you can't strike. When you don't talk, it's very difficult to get work done anywhere, but particularly in a farming operation.

That was the situation and the climate being generated by Bill 91. If you have a problem as either the farmer or the employee on a farm, you'd better discuss it and arrive at some sort of agreement or go your separate ways. There is no middle of the road here. And I do not think this Legislature or any government can come in and dictate to farmers and the people who work for them how they should run their businesses.

Bill 7 also prohibits an employer from dismissing or otherwise discriminating against any employee who exercised rights under Bill 91 while 91 was in force, so there is some protection there.

As soon as Bill 7 receives royal assent, all proceedings in process under Bill 91, including arbitration, mediation or any other matter before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, will be terminated. Any collective agreement in place under Bill 91 will also be terminated upon royal assent of Bill 7.

There will be no legal recourse to strike activities under Bill 7, since agriculture is exempt from the Labour Relations Act. Work stoppages can be part of existing labour-management discussions, but because Bill 7 contains no means for organizing the family farm, strike action will not be possible.

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, during the farm show at Burford and again during the International Plowing Match, had a survey, and from what I can make out from the information they've provided me, 63% of respondents to the CFFO survey conducted at the

outdoor farm show in September indicated that they support the repeal of Bill 91.

As a politician who's been around here for almost 12 years, I am pleased to stand in my place today and do what I said I would and support my government. Two years ago, when Bill 91 became law, I stood in my place over there convinced, and indeed made a solemn pledge, that we would repeal that bill should we ever be granted the opportunity of being in power in Ontario, and this is the beginning of this repeal.

I want to thank the Minister of Labour for initiating this movement because it is acting exactly the way agriculture and food producers in Ontario want us to. We are putting our money where our mouth is.

1610

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): It's my great privilege to rise today representing the people of the riding of Wellington, who've seen fit to return me here for the 36th Parliament, to speak in support of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity. More than anything else, the intent of this bill is to encourage companies to create new jobs in Ontario, the new jobs we need for the workers of this province.

The government has undertaken this change in our labour law on the strength of five years of consultation with the people of Ontario while we sat in opposition. We undertake this change, having made this one of the central issues of our election campaign, with the legitimacy that only our election as a majority government can bring.

We have consulted. We have listened. There is legitimacy to our approach, and now it's time to act to reform our labour laws, to encourage the creation of new jobs.

Bill 7 does this in several ways:

It repeals the former government's Bill 40, which, in the two and a half years since it became law, has created an imbalance in labour relations tilted towards the union leaders, and this has discouraged job-creating investment.

It repeals the former government's Bill 91, the Agricultural Labour Relations Act, recognizing the absolute need for labour flexibility in Ontario's agribusiness to ensure that there are no strikes, work stoppages, slowdowns or job action of any kind when agribusiness must be operational, such as planting and harvest time.

Bill 7 also amends the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, and it amends the Employment Standards Act to make the employee wage protection program financially sustainable while still preserving the wage protection program as the most generous in Canada.

But most importantly, Bill 7 introduces new approaches to ensure democracy in the workplace, giving new say to individual workers through a secret ballot vote requirement for union certification, contract ratification and strike votes, ensuring that our workplaces are more democratic, with every union member having the opportunity to directly participate in key workplace decisions.

The secret ballot is perhaps the most important and fundamental aspect of our democratic political system, allowing voters in local, provincial and federal elections

the right to make their choices for the election of governments with privacy and free from coercion.

Now this legitimate, democratic right will be enshrined in our labour laws through Bill 7 and extended to employees in their workplaces so that they can make important decisions about joining a union, approving a contract or considering a strike without fear of pressure or intimidation from unions or management so that the will of the majority will prevail.

In my considered view, union leaders have nothing to fear from the secret ballot if they are representing the views and the wishes of their membership. For union leaders who are out of touch with the wishes of their members, the secret ballot will be a wake-up call to be more accountable to those they are representing.

I want to congratulate my friend the Minister of Labour, who has done a superlative job since assuming that position. It is accurate to say that no Minister of Labour in Ontario's history has fought harder to encourage job creation in the interests of all the workers in this province.

In her five years in opposition while she served as Conservative Labour critic, she exemplified every good quality you could ever imagine, being constructive and positive, listening and consulting extensively, and responding in the appropriate way to ensure that the interests of all workers in Ontario were being represented and were being considered by the government of the day. No member of the last Parliament was harder working, more responsible or a better listener than our present Minister of Labour.

Since becoming Minister of Labour, she's reached out immediately to consult all the groups and stakeholders with an interest in labour issues. She has consulted, she has listened, and now it is time to act.

This Bill 7 has been greeted in Wellington with considerable support, particularly from those who create the jobs in our riding, and I want to share two examples with the House.

From Howard Frohlich, president of the Guelph Utility Pole Company Limited:

"We strongly support the repeal of Bill 40. This is the type of change that is needed to keep industry in Ontario.

"Hopefully the changes that are being made by our government, including Bill 40, will convince some of the industry we have lost to the US to return to Ontario."

And from Richard Speare of Speare Seeds in Harriston:

"I support your plan to repeal Bill 40. This will then give business an interest to invest more in industry. We have cut back ourselves in the last two or three years as we could not afford all the extra costs of hiring more people. Without Bill 40, we trust the CN railroad from Stratford to Douglas Point will reopen and we are able to use this service."

This Bill 7 is but one step forward to encourage new investment in Ontario, to create a more positive business climate and to create the jobs we need. Today in Wellington county, in towns like Fergus and Mount Forest and Palmerston and Harriston, in villages like Erin, Arthur,

Drayton and Aberfoyle and in our many townships, there are hundreds of people who are looking for work and can't find it.

As the member of provincial Parliament for Wellington, I will never be satisfied until every single worker in Wellington county who's looking for work can find it.

That, then, must be the central objective of this government, to encourage job creation for everyone, and Bill 7 meets this test. I urge all members of this House to support Bill 7.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Further debate from the government side of the House? Before we move to the opposition side, there's an opportunity for questions and/or comments.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I've listened with interest over the course of the last two days in the Legislature to the Chair of Management Board, to my esteemed colleague from Nepean, to my esteemed colleague from Wellington, to the Minister of Agriculture.

We indicated earlier that we support the government in its desire to repeal Bill 91 for many of the reasons that the minister himself outlined. I must say, however, that in dealing with the question of Bill 7 and Bill 40, the government members, in our view, have overlooked—simply overlooked—the facts. Indeed, as the member for Nepean was speaking on Thursday with respect to the issue of harmony in the workplace, we were confronted with the spectre of Nestlé's, a major employer here in Toronto, saying unequivocally that any future investments that they were considering would be put on hold because of the instability that Bill 7 is unnecessarily creating.

What is important to economic growth, one of the key components to economic growth, I suspect, and it has been verified by companies such as Chrysler, companies such as Nestlé, many other smaller companies, McDonnell Douglas, an example of a larger company, the best way to create a climate for investment is to create a stable climate. We have been told unequivocally—unequivocally—that the proposals contained in Bill 7 with respect to the Labour Relations Act will create instability.

The final point that has been absolutely not addressed by the government is the facts around investment, the facts around job creation and the facts around the performance of the economy since the implementation of the bill. We invite you in your future statements to look realistically at those.

The Acting Speaker: Any other comments or questions?

Mr Hampton: Yes. I want to respond to some of the rhetoric of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

First of all, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, in his attempt to rewrite history, suddenly skips over the fact that most of the western world had to live through a recession, beginning in about the fall of 1989, and all governments were strapped and had to live with some difficult medicine to do that.

I would remind him that the Progressive Conservative government that was in office in Ottawa—his executive

assistant he recruited from that government—the Mulroney government, racked up a deficit of \$45 billion in its last year in office—much, much higher on a per capita basis than we had here in Ontario—and, I might say, a debt of approaching \$600 billion. So we don't need any revisionist history lectures from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. All governments had to deal with some difficult issues, and I would argue we dealt with them much better than his friends in Ottawa dealt with Canada's problems.

The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs tries to make a guarantee, or at least he spouts the language of a guarantee, of an exemption for agriculture in terms of labour relations. Let me tell you, he's talking through his hat again. The reality is that we're dealing with a Charter of Rights issue here, the freedom of association. He can write all the fluorescent language he wants, and if the Ontario Labour Relations Board, upon hearing good argument, and higher courts, upon hearing good argument, find that his guarantee of exemption is nothing more than baloney, then it will not in fact provide a guarantee, and knowledgeable people in the field of agriculture know that.

The Acting Speaker: Any other further questions or comments? Yes, the member from—sorry, you'll have to help me out here.

M. John R. Baird (Nepean) : Nepean. Merci, Madame la Présidente. J'apprécie le commentaire de mes collègues le ministre de l'Agriculture et le député de Wellington. J'apprécie leurs commentaires.

These comments made by my two colleagues I think are very important. For too long in this House and in election campaigns, politicians have said one thing before the election campaign when they're seeking votes, and then another thing after the election campaign when they're governing. I think the importance of their comments is probably best reinforced by the Minister of Agriculture's comments that "This is what we said we would do."

Unionizing the family farm was a wrong decision when it was brought in. It was met with great hostility in rural Ontario. It was an action that really, really was devastating to the morale on family farms, and repealing Bill 91 is an important process in our overall effort to create jobs and hope and prosperity in this province.

I also note that repealing Bill 91 was a major commitment that our party made in opposition. The two members' comments on repealing Bill 40, in my judgement, were very to the point and very wise.

I have a letter here, the fact that many Liberals are supporting our effort to repeal Bill 40. The honourable member for Fort William, when she was Leader of the Opposition in the previous Parliament, asked the former member for Mississauga West, Steve Mahoney, to be her party's Labour critic. I got a letter dated August 10 from Mr Mahoney where he says that for people in business this is very good news indeed, our repeal of Bill 40, which is very appreciated. He goes on to say that our repeal would mean that any decisions made on or after

June 26 would be subject to the new law. He wants us to go farther than we're going. He goes on to say he would urge the minister to announce that her new bill—"which we eagerly await," he says—would be effective June 26. But again, this government has acted in a balanced approach and isn't going as far as Mr Mahoney would like us to go. But our bill will create jobs, hope and opportunity.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I respond to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs first in that one of the justifications for the moves is that you face a substantial financial problem in the province. We agree with that; you do.

But I think the people of the province have to recognize the way you are dealing with that financial problem. Just so everyone recognizes this, yes, the deficit is a huge problem, we agree, and it must be dealt with. But this is a government that is choosing to deal with it by cutting taxes by \$5 billion a year. You are going to go out and borrow \$20 billion to pay for this tax cut. The Premier today said that that's foreign money you've got to borrow. That's exactly right. How is this government planning to deal with a huge deficit problem? By cutting taxes by \$20 billion; by paying interest on that \$20-billion cut of \$5 billion a year over your term; by running up another \$20 billion of debt.

When you became the government, yes, the debt was \$90 billion. Now you are saying when you go out of office the debt will be \$120 billion. You are going to go out and borrow \$20 billion, pay \$5-billion interest, for that tax break. I'm not sure where that makes sense. Yes, everyone wants a tax break, but does it make any sense to any of you to go out and borrow \$20 billion to pay for that tax cut? It makes no sense to me. That is not common sense; it's nonsense. It's nonsense to borrow \$20 billion. It's money we don't have. It is like a company declaring a huge dividend when it's bankrupt. The Premier says the province is bankrupt, and you are going to borrow \$20 billion to buy a tax break. It makes no sense.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time is up. The member for S-D-G & East Grenville has two minutes to sum up.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: To my colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt and to my critic from up north with the third party, you have to understand that in Economics 101 something is called the law of diminishing returns, and the law of diminishing returns occurred on taxes about the first year that the NDP came to power. They increased the taxes very considerably. What happened? Less money came in. You've got to create a climate that is encouraging people to do something.

The total debt at the end of this fiscal year, as the member for Scarborough-Agincourt knows, will be very nearly \$100 billion.

We are 11 million people in the province of Ontario. That is a very substantial amount for every man, woman and child if we continue to tax as the red book would have—the red book here, and it's called The Ontario Liberal Plan: amazing. That book would have increased the total debt.

It's very interesting that my Liberal colleagues had a very wishy-washy plan. As a matter of fact, it wishy-washed right down the drain. However, their plan was such that, "Well, we will look at it; just send us to power." We had you in power. Recall 1985 to 1990. I happened to be here, and the money that was spent to try to keep the squeaky wheel quiet was unbelievable.

The people from Ontario recognized that. They recognized that very clearly in 1990. The law of diminishing returns was applying. The Premier of the day knew that a recession was right at the beginning and he said: "We'll go to the people. We'll have a nice, clean election in the summer and go back to power and live through this."

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The member's time is up. Further debate?

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): As the Liberal co-critic for Agriculture, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak on Bill 7 on behalf of farmers regarding the repeal of Bill 91. I must say that I'm pleased to be standing in my place in a comment to the minister after about 12 days of being here.

Before I move on to the agricultural component of Bill 7, that is, the repeal of Bill 91 and the definition of "agriculture," there's one aspect of the bill which I would like to remark on. Part II, which deals with amendments to the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, gives the government unprecedented power to privatize provincial public services while trampling the rights of crown employees.

When I read some of the articles in the local media I couldn't believe my eyes and thought that surely the press was exaggerating the intent of the government. But when I investigated I discovered that indeed the government's changes to successor rights in the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act will make radical changes which will totally undermine the rights of crown employees.

This section of the bill will take away seniority and pension rights. Protection against arbitrary dismissal will disappear. Negotiated wage bargains will disappear. This law will allow employers to set whatever wage they choose.

If this happens, there will be a level of dissension and conflict such as this province has never seen before. I believe that you are responsible for the legislative precinct, Speaker. If I were you I would invest in grass seed and sod because these grounds will be trampled into mud by the force of the protest.

1630

When the NDP passed Bill 91 in the spring of 1994, they did so after years of browbeating farm groups with the expressed intention to remove the previous Ontario labour relations exemption which had protected farmers. As far back as 1991, in their initial labour consultations, the NDP were threatening the farm community with full exposure to Bill 40, with no protection or exemptions. At that time government lawyers stated that even existing exemptions would not stand up in court and farmers would be vulnerable to court challenges from disgruntled farm employees.

Now in 1992, the previous government set up the agriculture labour task force to study the unique nature of agriculture in relation to labour reform. But before the task force was completed and could make any recommendations whatever, the NDP carried out its threat and removed the agricultural exemption under the Ontario Labour Relations Act, removing all protection for farmers and bringing them under the full impact of the Ontario Labour Relations Act. With this stick, the NDP forced farm groups to agree to reforms, because without the exemption, farmers were dependent on the NDP to bring in some legislation to protect them.

When the task force finally completed its recommendations, it suggested specific measures to protect the agricultural industry and family farms, such as preventing strikes, separate legislation instead of amendments to the Ontario Labour Relations Act, and exempting family members from having to join any union which was organized on a farm.

These recommendations were drafted only to moderate the effect of Bill 40 on farmers, not because of any desire of farmers to unionize.

Farmers had been well and truly backed into a corner by the government and the recommendations were only supported by farm groups to the extent that they minimized the damage which the current Bill 40 could inflict. Into their climate of intimidation and coercion, Bill 91 was born.

Now, although the NDP government said it had implemented the task force recommendations in Bill 91, there were many, many discrepancies. Farm groups found 11 major areas where Bill 91 failed to live up to the spirit and the wording of the recommendations. Even the amendments left a number of major problems. While Bill 91 prevented strikes, it created a whole new bureaucracy of red tape for farmers and it pressured an increase in farm employee wages, costing farmers more money in a time when there was less money to go around.

The labour task force had recommended putting the administration of Bill 91 under a separate board, with farmers as representation, but still Bill 91, when passed, operated under the broader Ontario Labour Relations Board. As well, Bill 91 did not provide strong enough penalties to prevent strikes. Bill 91 referred to the enforcement and penalty provisions of the broader Labour Relations Act, which involved a complicated process of first investigating labour disputes and then requiring the labour relations board to make a ruling.

The Labour Relations Act process was designed to mediate disputes where strikes were legal. It was slow, taking days to resolve an illegal work stoppage. Agriculture is seasonal, and even a short work stoppage would have major implications. So even if strikes were inherently illegal under Bill 91, a faster and stronger enforcement and penalty provision should have been established in deference to the seasonality of farming.

During critical times of the season, a strike would be devastating for agriculture. The timeliness of planting and harvesting of crops can be brought down to the hour. Agriculture cannot withstand strike situations where the production of crops is at stake.

We are speaking about crops which are perishable goods. Their value can be destroyed by rain, hail, frost, high winds and, in some cases, too much heat. Any stoppage in planting dates or harvesting dates would disrupt the delivery of the crop to the marketplace.

Processors also need to know that their production lines will continue to move according to schedule and that crops are moving out of the field and to their plant. In many cases, the processor will contract with a group of growers to plant their crops in sequence, a few days apart, to ensure the steady and timely delivery of produce and to guarantee that the plant management schedule is met.

What that means is that each grower's harvest must be completed exactly on time. This is done to optimize plant efficiency and competitiveness and to maintain the quality of product that Ontario is known for.

So we recognize that agriculture has its unique problems when we speak about labour. During any disruption that labour might instigate, the crop keeps growing. They will keep maturing until they begin to rot. It is not the case of simply shutting down the line and hoping the apples go dormant or that the peaches stop ripening or that cauliflower will not turn brown. Livestock won't stop eating or needing water, and birds won't stop laying. Sows won't stop giving birth. A farm isn't like a factory. You can't turn off the lights and go home.

Now, let's get back to the charter scare tactics. The previous government was in fact telling farmers that the exemption for farmers would not stand up in a court challenge. Well, if it's true that a disgruntled employee could file a challenge with the courts about not being able to join a union, he could just as easily have challenged not being able to go on strike. So tell me, Mr Speaker, what protections would Bill 91 have given?

Now the Conservative government lawyers are telling farm groups that with the repeal of Bill 91, the exemption will stand up to the court challenge. But these are exactly the same lawyers who not too long ago said it would not.

I guess they did their work too well, because now farm groups like the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation are concerned. They see the Tory promise to restore the agricultural exemption to the Ontario Labour Relations Act as problematic and possibly destabilizing, since the previous government warned that the exemption was doomed to a court challenge as an infringement of the Canadian rights under the charter.

To provide some sense of stability, the Christian Farmers Federation believes that the exemption needs to come with a "notwithstanding" clause that shields it from the charter challenge. Without it, farmers are at risk of allowing the courts to dump on them and into the industrial Labour Relations Act. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture says, "Repeal without remedy is both politically simplistic and shortsighted."

They are well-considered and researched responses coming from farm groups, and they know what they're talking about. The farm organizations in Ontario represent a tremendous resource. They have a pool of knowledge, experience and understanding of farm issues.

That seems pretty simple, doesn't it, that farm organizations would have the best appreciation of farm issues. Yet it's still something that seems to be escaping Mr Harris and Mr Villeneuve as they forge ahead with cuts to this vital segment of Ontario's economy without listening, in spite of their campaign promises.

When Minister Villeneuve made his visits to farm communities across the province in a series of hastefully contrived "table talks," he did so under the guise of consulting with farm groups and listening to their collective wisdom and insights. But it appears that he was only seeking validation from the agrifood sector to wield the Tory axe one more time. He didn't listen, he didn't listen at all, or he would have heard about the importance of agricultural research.

1640

During the table talks, funding for research emerged as a priority item. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture president, Roger George, met with prominent Ontario agricultural researchers at the University of Guelph and said that budget cutbacks to the Ministry of Agriculture's \$30.6-million annual University of Guelph research grant would be misguided and disastrous for the long-term viability of Ontario agriculture.

The University of Guelph is a world-class facility doing major research and development that brings an average of \$40 of return for every dollar of expenditure. Don't we wish we could all have a return like that?

For example, the University of Guelph has developed a new variety of soybeans which has pushed the economic production of this crop to a new geographic frontier. Furthermore, due to genetic superiority, this soybean will return an extra \$28 per acre of income to farmers with no increased cost whatsoever. Moderate estimates indicate that this will increase the farm income by \$12 million annually, with a multiplier effect that will occur in the rural area.

Mr George said that agricultural research is the most effective farm safety net program we can have. Of the University of Guelph's total annual agricultural research budget of \$67.3 million, \$30.6 million comes from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. This core provincial funding ensures that Guelph research can attract further federal, private and stakeholder funding. Cutting back on research would be a betrayal of the next generation of food production.

Protection of this infrastructure and the continuation of the hundreds of vital projects being undertaken at the University of Guelph is critical to the growth of Ontario's economy. When you realize that agriculture currently receives less than 1% of provincial spending yet the agrifood industry accounts for 5.8% of Ontario's gross domestic product, you realize the importance of agriculture to Ontario's economy and the importance of research to agriculture.

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario also emphasizes that research is an infrastructure investment. The cutting of research dollars does immediate harm to the research facility and related industries and the entire economy. Ontario research facilities like the University of

Guelph, the Ridgetown College of Agricultural Technology and the Kemptville College of Agricultural Technology are leaders in their field. The technologies developed at these facilities are used around the world. This means that the technologies create jobs for Ontario companies, which also compete in a global market.

If we have to count on others to do our research, this will also mean that the capital investment and related production will remain where they were developed. This leads us to an exportation of jobs and capital, something that I believe Ontario can ill afford.

Although these crucial points were made at Minister Villeneuve's table talks, they were somewhat ignored. The Conservative government announced \$13 million in permanent program reductions, which included research administration, the tender fruit lands program, the private mortgage guarantee component of the agricultural investment strategy, the tile drainage loan program, and the Brighton Veterinary Laboratory will be closed, the milk utilization audit program will be cancelled, and Foodland Ontario is also being cut. The list goes on, and these cuts are only the tip of the iceberg if Mr Harris applies the 20% figure which officials have been using as the range needed to balance Ontario's budget.

When Mike Harris released his Revolution document, he promised farm communities that under a Conservative government agriculture would regain its fair share of government support.

During the NDP mandate, Ontario's family farms were all but ignored. While the agri-industries called for economic initiatives to protect and increase jobs, the \$26-billion industry was hit by debilitating cuts by the former government. Although overall Ontario government spending increased by more than 15% during that mandate, agricultural spending declined by 14%, reducing its share of the provincial budget to less than 1% of provincial spending. I do believe the Common Sense Revolution backs these figures and goes further to say that if all government ministries experienced downsizing similar to OMAFRA, Ontario would not be facing its current debt crisis. So I want to say that agriculture has done its part in dealing with the debt problems of this province.

Mike Harris promised that there would be no cuts to agriculture, not a single nickel. During the opening remarks at the leaders' debate that was hosted by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Mike Harris delivered the following comments, and I'm going to read them to you exactly:

"What you will find in my plan is that there are no cuts to agricultural programs. In fact, we find the \$6 billion in expenditure reductions in other areas. Those are the areas that have been burgeoning out of control, not agriculture. Indeed, under a Harris government, agriculture—and our commitment is firm—will regain its fair share of government support and priorities." Later in his remarks, Harris said, "Services and support for farmers themselves are fully protected."

That is what he said, and those promises were repeated over and over and over and over during the campaign. But it was just another example of the betrayal and broken promises of this government.

While we are talking about agriculture's proper place in the government's spotlight, I would like to clear up some misconceptions which have been raised by the government.

Mr Villeneuve suggests that agriculture suffered indifference from the Liberal government. While this makes for good rhetoric, it hardly stands up to scrutiny. Under our government, agricultural support and programs nearly doubled. This hardly seems like indifference to me.

I guess Mr Harris is not too worried about breaking his promises to agriculture or to the sick or to the disabled. He knows, he says, he has to be ready to make those tough decisions. But I'll be really interested to see what happens when he has to break his tax cut promise to the wealthy. Yes, that will be a very interesting one.

In the words of Ontario Federation of Agriculture president Roger George, no one respects financial responsibility more than farmers, "but indiscriminate budget slashing coupled with current regulatory impediments to innovative economic strategy will freeze agricultural growth. If this government stalls agriculture, it will stall the entire Ontario economy."

As a long-time farmer and businessman, I listen to farm organizations that understand agriculture and I know what the farm community needs to remain competitive in the face of continual low international commodity prices and new international trade agreements.

1650

Because of the delays which it brought to time-sensitive farm operations, many farmers across the province have advised me that they will be pleased to see the end of Bill 91 and the increased cost and red tape I mentioned earlier. But farmers also believe that the government must be willing to engage in full consultation with farm groups before change is undertaken.

There are many other problems facing the farm community which illustrate this same heavy-handed, bureaucratic approach to rural issues. This government must address these problems and it must start listening.

This government stated in its campaign document the importance of the production of ethanol and supported the plants which have already been proposed. These projects are crucial to the economy of Cornwall and Chatham and their respective areas and, according to the Tory campaign document, important to the environment.

The Ontario Corn Producers' Association represents 21,000 farmers in Ontario who want these government commitments honoured. The plants and the ethanol they will produce represent substantial economic development for rural Ontario, a major market opportunity for Ontario farm crops and the promise of cleaner air quality through expanded use of renewable ethanol-blended gasoline. Now that commercial outlets and the public are considering ethanol-enhanced gasolines, it's even more important to get these facilities up and running.

As the Ontario Corn Producers' Association points out, no government support will be needed for fuel ethanol manufacturing in the long term; however, this is not true in the short term, in part because of the multibillion-

dollar subsidy and tax-break supports which have been given to other fossil fuel development.

We are all concerned that this funding now is in jeopardy. One must wonder what has changed since June 8 that these plants are no longer a priority.

The Ontario Soybean Growers' Marketing Board speaks for 20,000 soybean growers across Ontario, and it has written to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture regarding other commitments in the Tory campaign document. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture concurs.

This promise can be found on page 13: "A Mike Harris government will support and actively promote the establishment of a whole farm support program.... We also believe the inequities of the gross revenue insurance program should be relieved by increasing market revenue insurance coverage to 85%." So far, this promise goes unfulfilled.

As the Soybean Growers' Marketing Board points out, the cost of increasing the coverage under the market revenue program from 80% to 85% of the historic average price and farm yield will be at no greater cost to the government of Ontario, due to the decline in the average prices on which the support payments are based.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture estimates the annual cost for the 85% market revenue insurance coverage, to begin in 1996-97, is only about one third of the cost of the market revenue insurance program when it came in, in the early 1990s. This means that the Mike Harris promise can be honoured, and other improvements in farm safety net programs, while still permitting some reduction in associated provincial spending compared to other years. In fact, recent data generated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs shows that the cost of delivering an 85% program in 1996 will be significantly lower than the cost of an 80% program delivered in 1994. So why isn't the government keeping its campaign promise?

The government has said that it's concerned about the development of rural communities, but it has refused to respond to problems which have been raised because of a ridiculous reinterpretation of a 22-year-old septic systems regulation which has not kept pace with current technology. This is causing the development in rural areas to slow to almost nothing.

In my area people have stopped building, they have stopped building on to existing homes, and in at least one case a family that I know risks the chance of losing their home completely. Two of my constituents, Starla and Randy Wilkinson, may lose their house because of an Environment ministry regulatory bind. They got approval—

Hon Mr Villeneuve: The minister told you she was going to look after it.

Mr Hoy: I asked August 4; she takes too long. They got approval from the septic system inspector and the building inspector to renovate their property. Halfway through the renovation, the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority advised that new ministry enforcement of old regulation 358/90 since April 1, 1995, requires them to install a \$25,000 raised system, which

they cannot afford. The bank won't lend them any money and they probably can't sell the house because your ministry will fine the property \$300 a day. The house may have to be totally abandoned.

In my riding the issue of raised-bed septic tanks is creating havoc for rural homeowners across a 90-mile-long riding. It also is causing havoc in the riding of Essex South. This is a regulation which requires homeowners to install fully raised septic systems which cost about \$25,000 and are too large to be accommodated on most rural lots. The regulation is 22 years old and has not changed with current technology.

For the past six years, the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority has been approving permits for partially raised septic systems, a newer technology developed from the fully raised system which costs somewhere between \$6,000 and \$7,000 to install.

Local MOE staff say, and I quote, "All our indications are that the system is working, but we're caught in a regulatory bind." When is this government going to address this outdated regulation? How many families will have to lose their homes because of a regulatory bind before the ministry finally acts?

This is not what the Conservatives said they would do during the election. The government will not even give these people the courtesy of a response to their concerns. We have been writing to the minister since late August about the issue. With all of the pressure on the minister because of a question in this Legislature, I finally received acknowledgement that she may look into it. I wait for a real answer and a real response to a letter that was dated August 4. I have also heard from constituents that they cannot talk to or get a response from the government, or even a backbencher when he's back on the weekends.

1700

Another issue which demonstrates this government's lack of commitment to rural affairs is one which I wrote about to the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Mr Palladini. For over 35 years there's been a licence issuing office in Ridgetown, Ontario, which illustrates a proven need. This is a fine, thriving community in my riding.

Well, the last licensee in that office could not afford to install the handicap washroom which the ministry requested, so she closed her operation down.

Since that time, the citizens of Ridgetown and the surrounding area have had to travel quite a distance to seek licensing services. This is not only costly and inconvenient to individual citizens, it is detrimental to the economy and viability of that particular community.

There are two large car dealerships in Ridgetown, which depend on local issuing for efficient service. I'm sure that I don't have to lecture the minister about the importance of dealerships' need for quick and courteous service.

Interjection: Who's that, the Minister of Transportation?

Mr Hoy: Right. As you know, Minister, when people buy a car, they want to take it home yesterday. The cost

of travelling—and it's hitting them hard for their many daily transactions—is undermining their ability to compete and perform.

I wrote to the minister to tell him all this and urge him to approve the reopening of an office in Ridgetown, but the minister wrote back that the government is facing some difficult economic decisions and the expansion of licensing service in our vicinity is not appropriate at this time.

However, the interesting thing is that this office would cost the government nothing, since it is a franchise. The local chamber of commerce is even committed to paying for the computer training.

So tell me where the sense is in this decision. Does this sound like a government committed to rural development?

Mr Duncan: No. Not at all.

Mr Hoy: I don't think so, and neither do the 1,383 people in the area of Ridgetown who signed a petition for the licence issuing office.

To go back to Bill 7, I must raise with the minister that the government's responsibility cannot end with the repeal of Bill 91. There are many farmers and farm groups, like the OFA and the Christian Farmers Federation, that have raised with me their concerns about the charter challenge.

Another issue raised by the OFA is that the definition of agriculture in Bill 7 simply lists all the known types of agriculture and doesn't answer the overall question, are farmers exempt under the new bill?

It is crucial that the Minister of Labour, or even the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, clear the air on this issue and table a specific legal opinion from their legal staff explaining how the wording in Bill 7 will assure farmers that they will not face a charter challenge over their exemption. It's a simple thing to do. It would clarify much for the farm community and give farm leaders some dependable facts that they have been missing in the rhetoric over this very serious issue.

Or instead, perhaps the government would prefer to go to court on behalf of this legislation and the farm community in order to defend the exemption.

A few days ago in this House, we had three separate ministers stand up to make statements on Bill 7. Even the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs stood up to show how he was doing his part. But if the minister had really been doing his job, he would have taken to the farm leaders and made sure that there was an indisputable legal opinion on charter issues instead of just making a superficial statement about legislation that wasn't even under his ministry's jurisdiction.

It has been a great pleasure for me to participate in this debate, which is so important to the future of agriculture. Coming from Essex-Kent, where our two counties combined have an annual farm gate value of nearly \$475 million, agriculture is very serious business in the counties of Essex-Kent because of the unmatched diversity in my riding, which includes grains, oilseeds, poultry, dairy, meat, greenhouse, horticulture, and fruit and vegetable production. Almost every agricultural policy in

this country affects that riding, Essex-Kent. As my federal colleague Jerry Pickard, the member for Essex-Kent, likes to say, if it doesn't grow in my riding, it doesn't grow in Canada.

So I beg the members' indulgence in bringing so many concerns into this debate, but all of these issues are impacted by this bill and by the manner in which this government charts its course without interest in real consultation with the farm community.

Finally, I would leave you with an observation from a newly elected member of provincial Parliament, an observation from my three short weeks here. Naturally, I'll have to do it with a rural comparison, but here goes: You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. My observation here has been: You can put a Tory into cabinet but you can't make him think.

Mr Phillips: Just to continue the debate, just in case anyone out there is wondering what we're debating, it's a bill called Bill 7, which is a very major revision to something called the Ontario Labour Relations Act. This is the act that governs all of our collective bargaining here in the province of Ontario, and it's extremely important. It's extremely important to every working person in the province; it's extremely important to every business in the province; it's extremely important to Ontario's economy.

I'd like to raise two or three issues. One is on process. I would just say that the process we're going to follow here will mean we have virtually no opportunity for public input into this bill. What will happen is that in eight weeks, this bill, if the government has its way, will become law. I think that's the government's agenda. It wants to force through the most sweeping changes—this is more sweeping, actually, than the NDP brought forward in what was called Bill 40, and we will have virtually no opportunity for public input.

I would say to the working community that this bill will impact you. You may not have heard of the bill, but in eight weeks it will be the law of the land. In the middle of December, perhaps not even eight weeks from now, it will be the law of the land, before you've even perhaps had an opportunity to become—

Applause.

Mr Phillips: I would say to you that we made this mistake. I'm a Liberal. We got elected with a large majority, and we thought just because we had a large majority, we knew everything that was right for the province of Ontario. And we did not give people an opportunity for input; we did not give people an opportunity to have a say on something that is going to fundamentally affect their lives.

The labour movement out there right now may think they have a lot of time to comment on the bill and to come to committee, but I will say that this bill will go to committee for a very few number of days. The committee will meet for perhaps three or four hours a day, for perhaps six days or seven days. There will be virtually no opportunity for public input.

Normally, the process we follow in this Legislature with major legislation is that when the Legislature is not

sitting, the affected committee meets and invites representation to come and express their views on the bill. That's not going to happen in this case. So we're going to find, as I say, the most significant change in labour relations in the history of the province all implemented in a matter of weeks.

I have many friends in the labour community; I have many friends in the employer community. I had one major labour lawyer representing management say to me: "I'm thrilled with the bill. I never thought I'd live to see the day when I got virtually everything I wanted in a bill." There's no question this is a major victory for the business community, no question at all about that.

1710

But I would say to all of us that when you win big you run the risk of losing big, and anybody who's been involved in collective bargaining knows this. If one side or another wins big at one stage you are setting yourself up to lose big at another stage, and this bill is a huge loss for the labour community; it's a huge win for the business community. There's no doubt of that.

I would say to all of you, you can ram the bill through. We can do what we can to encourage a broader debate, we can do what we can to encourage public hearings, but in the end you've got the right, not the right but the tools, to ram this through. I will say to you that before this House adjourns in December, unfortunately this bill will be the law of the land. I say "unfortunately" because clearly many people in the labour community are going to be extremely upset about it. This fundamentally affects their lives. It fundamentally affects things they've fought for their whole careers, and some of it's not right.

I would also say that you're going to start to find from some of the business community that they've got some real reservations about this bill and they will have very little time to input into the bill. I'm sure you're getting letters from some people in the business community, as I am, one letter here suggesting that there's the need for some major revisions in the bill, saying:

"The ramifications of this are particularly negative for government because, among other things, it will likely drop many people with low employment skills into the unemployment insurance ranks and eventually on to welfare ranks. In net, the current wording in Bill 7 would create a huge and unnecessary churn of people in their jobs with no benefit to anyone."

Now that's a very responsible businessperson. He is president of a very large company. But there are literally dozens of large companies similarly affected by it. Yet I assure you that as you rush ahead with this bill—and make no mistake, we are rushing ahead with the bill. I know the reason for it. You figure if some time goes by and the employee community has a chance to mobilize, it's going to make it fairly uncomfortable for you. But that's the price, often, of democracy. I realize you may not want to face that. You may not want to face that; you may want to just push it through, and you can and you will, but it's going to be a mistake.

Mr Cooke: This goes way beyond Bill 40. That was not your promise.

Mr Phillips: The member said it goes—it does; it goes way beyond Bill 40. If you don't realize that—I objected to Bill 40, as members will know. I felt that when you looked at Bill 40 the labour community essentially had a fairly big win. I looked at the provisions of Bill 40, which essentially were very strongly prolabour. The problem we run into now is this bill not only goes back to where we were before Bill 40, it goes well beyond. That's why, as I said, one of my friends in the labour law community who represents management said to me, "Listen, I never dreamed that we could get a bill as favourable to management as this particular bill is."

Mr Baird: Mrs McLeod says she was in favour.

Mr Phillips: The member for Nepean is barracking over there, but I will say to him that yes, you've got the numbers, yes, you can force this bill through and yes, you will. I would say to you that you are sowing the seeds of problems in the province of Ontario in the relationship between our employee and our employer communities. Make no mistake about that.

In addition to that, there are provisions in this bill that are clearly wrong. The business community needs an opportunity to review this bill. The business community needs an opportunity for public hearings on this.

Mr Baird: Let's construct the committee.

Mr Phillips: The member says, "Let's construct the committee." I just went through that with the member for Nepean, who could not have been listening. I said: "Listen, we are going to have committees here. While the Legislature is sitting we will have a maximum of 20 hours of committee work with virtually no opportunity for any public input in this."

This is becoming a trademark. For the first time in the history of the province of Ontario, Ontario will not have a budget this year. From the day Ontario became a province we've had a budget every single year. This is the first time in the history of the province we've not had a budget.

You can say: "Well, we came in in June. We couldn't possibly have a budget." There was a government elected exactly the same time as you in 1985 that was sworn in in June on the exact same day you were and presented a budget in October. The fact is, you don't want to present a budget. The fact is, you want to avoid any debate on it. The fact is that you want to avoid having the people of Ontario understand how you're managing the finances. The reason is—

Hon Mr Villeneuve: It was a budget that was blowing money away, out the doors and windows. I wouldn't be too proud of that one, Gerry.

Mr Phillips: I'm sorry, Mr Speaker. The reason I think now is becoming clear why they want to avoid a budget. I look at the Common Sense Revolution. What's happening out there right now is that there is a war on spending. We understand that.

The first casualties of the war are people on social assistance. We're asking them to take a 20% cut on their social assistance. We understand that. The second one, the second war, will be with our municipalities. We are going to cut, in a few weeks, the transfers to them.

We've cut halfway houses. All of our community and social service agencies have been cut, cut, cut. Why? Because the Premier says we have a war on the deficit. He's saying that we spend nearly \$9 billion in interest charges, we have to spend \$1 million an hour on interest, that we have to borrow our money offshore. It is true. All of that is true.

But what is happening? What is the other part of the Common Sense Revolution? You look at it here.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Tax cut.

Mr Phillips: Yes, we understand cut. Cut \$3.9 billion; cut \$5.7 billion; cut \$6 billion.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Economics 101, diminishing returns.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order, Minister.

Mr Phillips: But what also happens? While we're asking people to fight a war on expenditures, there are some people who are able to avoid the war. I call them draft dodgers. They're not going to fight the war on the deficit. As a matter of fact, if you earn \$150,000 in this province, you're going to get a tax break of \$5,000 from the government. So we find while we're asking all of these people, the most vulnerable people in many respects in our society, to cut, cut, cut, there are some draft dodgers, some people out there who aren't participating in the war and they're going to get a huge tax break.

It's right there: Cut \$6 billion, give a \$5-billion tax break. Every penny of that tax break, \$20 billion over the next five years, has to be borrowed money. We are going to pay \$5 billion a year more in interest to pay for that tax break. So what is it? Is it a war against the deficit that we all should be fighting, or is it a war against the deficit that we have to fight in order to give somebody else—and who else is it? It is our best-off people in society—a very major tax break.

Yes, it got you elected. I know that. It was a very attractive part of your platform: "We're going to give you a 30% tax break." In fact, it's a very attractive part of your platform for particularly many of the constituents that you represent. But what it means is we are going to spend five years grinding people, five years with this war against the deficit. Unfortunately, the people who are fighting the war are our most vulnerable. There are, as I say, some people who are sitting this war out and they are going to get a \$5,000 tax break.

I honestly don't think that makes sense. If the Premier is saying that we have to go and borrow this money from foreigners—that's his term—assuming we could find someone in the world to lend us the \$20 billion a year—and by the way, the day you came in, the debt of this province was \$90 billion. You have promised to take it up by \$30 billion. The years that you're there—

Mr Baird: How much did you promise?

Mr Phillips: The member is barracking over there. No one's managed the finances perfectly in this province, but the fact is that the Conservatives, the last time they happened to have their finger in the pie, took taxes up more than any previous government, took spending up

more than anybody's budget, took the deficit and the debt up faster than the next government. The point of all of that is this: Does it make sense to any of you to borrow \$20 billion, to spend \$5 billion in extra interest? 1720

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Phillips: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The reason I raise all of that is that I raise the point about the way this government is operating: It is a way to avoid debate.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. There's a period after this debate for questions and comments. Please, just reserve them. Ask them at that time.

Mr Phillips: The reason I raised all of that was that I was talking about the process we're following here and saying that in the most major—this bill's 132 pages long. It's a huge bill that will touch every workplace in the province. And yet it is going to go through by Christmas. By the middle of December, this bill would become law, with virtually no debate, and I've said this is becoming a pattern with the government.

No budget: the first time in the history of the province that Ontario has no budget. I was saying, why would it be that we don't have a budget? Why would we not have something here in the Legislature that we in the opposition have an opportunity to debate?

The government presents the budget. There's then a chance where we can respond to that. The budget can then be debated at committee. But, no, for the first time in the history, we won't have that.

Why? I don't know why. I think the public reason is, "Well, we simply don't have time for that." But I would say, what is more important than getting public approval for spending?

Mr Speaker, you are a historian. You understand that getting the duly elected body approving public spending is absolutely fundamental, but we're not going to have a chance to do that, for the first time in our history.

I submit one of the reasons is that, yes, we have to fight the deficit. There is not one person in this province who doesn't believe it is a major problem. There's not one person in the Liberal Party who doesn't believe it's a major problem. I don't think there's one person in this Legislature who doesn't believe it's a major problem.

But we do wonder, if it is the single biggest issue, can we also afford to cut taxes by \$5 billion a year? That's 10% of our revenue. Essentially, as I've said before, it's like a bankrupt company—and I use the analogy because the Premier himself has said the province is bankrupt—declaring a huge dividend every year. It doesn't make sense to me.

Similarly, there's a pattern we're following in dealing with this bill, where we will have very little debate. I submit to you that while you think this will all be behind you in the middle of December because you'll pass the bill, my experience is that when you pass a bill that affects people so directly and they've not had an oppor-

tunity to participate in that, you sow the seeds of a problem.

I also wanted to speak about the content of the bill. Ontario historically has had very good labour relations, with relatively few exceptions. There's been I think a good balance struck between the employers and the employees, and the proof of that is that Ontario, for a variety of reasons, but one of them has to be the climate, has been the strongest economy in Canada by far.

We at one time had the lowest unemployment rates in the country by far, as we all remember. We don't any more, by the way. All the western provinces have substantially lower unemployment rates now than Ontario does. But we had good labour relations. We had the major automotive companies choosing to invest heavily in Ontario. Why? Well, for a variety of reasons, I think: a very talented labour force, a good location. But it has to also be that there was a climate of good labour relations.

Anybody who's looked at the history of days lost to work stoppages and all of those things would say we've had, historically, a good climate of labour relations. In my opinion, Bill 40 tipped the balance. It needed to have revisions, and we, contrary to what someone across the Legislature said earlier, ran on a platform of change in Bill 40. We were very clear about that.

Mr Gerretsen: That's right. It's right in the red book.

Mr Phillips: It's right in the red book. There was no question that bill had to be revised and changed—absolutely—but it had to be revised and changed in a balanced way. The Conservative Party got lots of votes by saying, "We're going to scrap Bill 40." We were at a disadvantage with the electorate, because that sounded nice and simple, but when we looked at it, it isn't that simple. There is a balance in labour relations that has to be struck, and you've gone too far with this bill.

Go through this bill, 132 pages, and run through the advantages for the working people of this province in it. It is a strong pro-management document. I know you will argue that this is going to attract lots of investment to the province, but I would argue that what is more likely to attract investment in the long term is a balanced approach to labour relations, where people believe that our labour community and our management community can work together.

As I say, I know you want to get this bill passed quickly because you think there will be calm. My fear is that you're trying to win big here, and when you win big you rub some people's noses in it and you make life very difficult for the employee community.

I'm afraid you'll have a victory in the middle of December and then for many, many, many years ahead we're going to see the problems created by this particular bill.

I would have hoped that the government might have taken the time to ensure that it was a balanced bill, might have taken the time to ensure that all of us, including the employer community, had adequate time to participate in it. That's not the case, and that, unfortunately, is too bad for this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Having listened now to the members for Scarborough-Agincourt and Essex-Kent, I would ask the Tory members of the House and the public to join me in showing a high degree of compassion and pity for the situation that our colleagues in the Liberal Party find themselves in around both Bill 40 and Bill 7. Here's a party that, during the last Legislature, joined behind the Tories, because the Tories were leading the fight—give them their due. They fought against it and the Libs kind of slid in behind there trying to get as much "Me too, me too" as they could. In fact, their whole red book is pretty much a pretty light shadow of the Common Sense Revolution, which—

Applause.

Mr Christopherson: You might not like the next sentence—which, by the end of this term, I predict, they'll be distancing themselves from as it becomes more and more unpopular.

But that's for another day.

The fact is, the Liberals are showing their truest colours on this bill right here, because they're trying to be all things to all people, and in doing so they do nothing for anyone. No one—no one—is conned into believing that the Liberals stand up and represent workers in Ontario, and obviously the business community isn't exactly enthralled with their ideological approach or lack thereof, or they would have had the kind of support in the business community that clearly the Tories had.

So I call on colleagues to recognize the poor dance of the Liberals and show some compassion as they try to bob and weave their way yet again through another very difficult situation and at the end of the day go off into that abyss, never to be heard from again.

1730

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): After listening to the second-last speaker, I finally realize why two plus two is now five.

I would like to share a letter I received from one of my constituents this past week:

"When the NDP brought out Bill 40, we believed the whole intent of it was so unions could increase their membership, which they were losing due to reduced employment and the state of the economy. We completely disagreed with the successor rights of the bill, which forced companies to hire the previous employer's employees, especially in instances where the customer was dissatisfied with the services being performed.

"Now that the obligation on the new contractor to offer employment is changed, we find ourselves in a predicament. Prior to this, we could not pick up work due to the fact that we had to charge union rates, which placed us approximately 20% to 30% higher than our competition. Now, after the change, we find our customers tendering and leaving us unable to compete with non-union companies.

"The information or assistance we are seeking is, how do we get out of this union agreement before we lose our business completely?" Bill 7 will introduce the right to work in the workforce again, as opposed to the right to a union.

I would also point out that Mr Hargrove was quoted in the Toronto Star on October 23. "Hargrove, who has called for anarchy in the workplace"—is that being a responsible Canadian, I ask—"said his union will not stand idly by while a 'bunch of right-wing, conservative idealogues' tear apart what workers struggled to achieve over a half-century."

However, Mr Pomeroy, the president of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union, said he didn't think the CAW's fight on the shop floor was a productive strategy.

Mr Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to congratulate my colleagues the members for Essex-Kent and Scarborough-Agincourt for the excellent presentations they gave.

In the last couple of minutes, we've just been given an indication of what exactly is wrong in the Legislature, in the way our friends both on the left and on the right perceive this. The problem with Bill 40 was that it was all pro-union, and the problem with this Bill 7 is that it's all pro-management. There are a whole bunch of other people out there, you know, who somehow feel that the real, true way to go on this legislation is somewhere down the middle.

You can scorn it, you can do all sorts of things with it, but in the long run, that notion of the general public will prevail, and time will bear me and us out in that.

We've heard from the government side on a number of occasions now that their Common Sense Revolution said they would revoke Bill 40, and I agree that that's what your document said. Well, why don't you revoke Bill 40 and leave it at that? Why did you bring all this other stuff into it as well?

I'm particularly thinking about those sections that deal with public sector rights and privatization. It's very interesting. Nobody has said anything about that yet, at least not to my knowledge, in this House.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: It's already been said.

Mr Gerretsen: Just a minute now. There are public sector employees out there who are really concerned about what the future will bring for them. There are 90,000 people out there whose morale is probably at the lowest point it can possibly be, all of whom are productive in our society, all of whom basically carry out the wishes of the Legislature and the wishes of the government. Let's consider them as well. They were not in Bill 40, but they certainly are included in this bill.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Mr Speaker, it's great to see you back in the Chair.

To comment on the remarks of my critic the member for Essex-Kent and my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt, it's funny, but my colleague from Essex-Kent is pretty mild in his support of the repeal of Bill 91, and Bill 40 of course they're retaining support for, in spite of the fact that we know shortline railways may never open again because of successor rights and what that does to the farming community. My colleague chose to stay away from that, and I understand that.

The "notwithstanding" clause—very interesting. It's

never been used in Ontario, ever, ever, yet it was suggested today. I looked at it because I thought, "On Bill 91, we want to make sure we do have an exemption for labour." We were accused of not getting legal advice. I think we got some pretty good legal advice, and we were advised by a pretty good team of lawyers that the "notwithstanding" clause was a last resort. We are taking their advice in order to make sure that agriculture is exempt from the labour laws that are coming in under Bill 7.

Fair share health tax: The member for Scarborough-Agincourt chose to not talk about that, but effectively it applies to people who will make \$50,000 or more, and those who are at the \$150,000 bracket will be paying a good share of that fair share health tax. You know, there was a 1.95% health tax brought in by the Peterson government that applied to business. "Let business pay": That's the Liberal approach, and it sent jobs all over the place.

The member for Scarborough-Agincourt mentioned that all other provinces have got an increasing labour force and Ontario doesn't. Look at what the Liberals did; you'll find the reason.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Scarborough-Agincourt, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr Phillips: There are two or three points, just to respond to the member for Hamilton Centre's tirade. The fact is that I make no apologies about being balanced. One of the problems we've run into, with all due respect to the NDP government, is that it was not seen as balanced. You saw the results of the poll, and the poll results gave you the answer that the people of Ontario do not want your type of government.

Now, the Conservatives happen to have won the election on what I regard as a platform of very small-c conservative, not what some would regard as right-wing. I don't share your view of Ontario, I have a different view from yours of Ontario, and we'll see over the next few years whose view is right or wrong. But I make no apologies, as a Liberal, of being seen to be and being in fact balanced and in the centre.

There's nothing more balanced than labour relations, where both sides on labour relations have to have a voice. There's no doubt that on Bill 40 labour spoke, and it was in that bill. You made a mistake on Bill 40, there is no doubt of that. One of the reasons you were defeated, one of the reasons why the business community and others were so angry, is that you made a big mistake on Bill 40.

Bill 7, in my judgement, is an equal mistake in the other direction. Time will tell. As I say, I make no apologies for being balanced and in the centre.

On the job front, when the Liberals came into power in 1985, the unemployment rate was 10%. That was from the Conservatives: 10%. When the Liberals were defeated, it was 5%, the lowest in the country. I make no apologies. When the Liberals were in power, there were jobs, jobs, jobs.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Christopherson: First of all, I want, as I have on almost every occasion that I've had an opportunity to

speak to this bill, to again call on the government to hold province-wide, public hearings on Bill 7. This is an incredibly complex and I would suggest draconian document running some 132 pages that I think the people of Ontario are entitled to debate and have input on. I know the government claims that by virtue of their electoral mandate, regarding Bill 40 they've had the public discussion and therefore have the right to proceed.

The difficulty that I believe most reasonable-minded people would find is that indeed Bill 7 goes far beyond Bill 40. In fact, it changes in very fundamental ways some of the cornerstones of labour relations in the province of Ontario for decades, under all three parties. And yet this government, that says it wants to have an open government, is not going to allow the people of Ontario to have an opportunity in their communities, which is where we suggest the truth lies in terms of the impact of Bill 40 and what it's meant, and we will continue using every means available—and they aren't an awful lot from the third party, but there are tools available, and we will continue to make the point and make the case that the people of Ontario are entitled to have input before you dramatically change the labour law of this province.

1740

I would also again point out, as I did earlier in members' statements, the number of letters, joint letters, that are coming in from unions—in particular, the CAW, and corporations, speaking to the fact that the era of unprecedented labour peace has been a factor in the record level of investment that we've had in the province of Ontario since Bill 40, and the message that it sends out to the international investment community.

I hear some of the government backbenchers barking out about the fact that it's blackmail, that they've done this with a gun to their head, and I want to comment very directly on that and I want to say two things: First of all, I don't happen to believe that is the case, because the fact of the matter is that there have been record levels of investment made under Bill 40. That's the truth, not the stories that the previous Tory caucus talked about in terms of half a million jobs lost. There's no proof. The proof is on our side in terms of defending the positive aspects of Bill 40. I believe that's what's reflected in these letters.

However, if in one or two cases that is the case, then I would suggest that it proves the point, and the point is that Ontario benefits when there are positive relationships between employers and employees, and the introduction of Bill 7 is going to disrupt labour relations in this province big time. Big-time disruption. So even if there are some where the corporations weren't necessarily thrilled to sign the letter, it makes the point: They are indeed worried about the impact on their business, on continuing investment, on continued job growth, on profits—which are important—because they are facing a labour movement that is having the boot put to it by this government.

While you sit there and smirk about it and think that it's funny, the fact of the matter is that that unprecedented era of labour peace we've had in Ontario that has been of benefit to us, whether you think it's a lot or a little, is going to change. It's going to change because this government went way beyond what they said they were going to do. They refused to let anybody have any input and in fact, every measure you've taken so far in government has clearly been anti-worker. Not just anti-union, although that's there writ large, but it's anti-worker.

All one has to do is listen to the cuts to WCB, the cancellation of the workplace health and safety agency, the gutting of the Ministry of Labour that's coming, the cancellation of the Royal Commission on Workers' Compensation. None of those things help workers, and workers know that. They may not understand every clause in here. Who does, if you're not a lawyer? That's what lawyers are for. But they sure understand when somebody is attacking them and taking away something, and that's what you're doing. And you do it under the guise of balance and mandate and a continuation of the rhetoric from your debate on Bill 40, because there's no proof.

If I'm wrong, then let's go out into the province and talk to the communities. What are you afraid of? Take this bill out there. There were five weeks of public hearings on Bill 40, in addition to the consultations of the minister etc. The legislative committee went out into the province for five weeks and out into the communities because we thought that was important. Why won't you do it? I don't believe that the average person will accept the fact that you already did that in the election.

As I mentioned before, now-Premier Harris stood up on the day the Bill 40 was passed and tabled a one-page document that rescinded Bill 40, and that represented his position. Look what we've got from the Tory government. Look what's here: wiping out decades of positive labour relations in this province, and you won't even let the people have their say. It's because you know—and maybe you don't, some of you in the government backbenches; I know how difficult it is in the early days to get information; all that will change; it's great fun watching how these things evolve—but the fact of the matter is that the cabinet ministers know that the truth will hurt you.

The truth will put fundamental cracks in the foundation of your arguments around Bill 7 and that's why you're afraid to go out and talk to the people: because you can't afford to face that truth.

I want to now move to another issue. I won't take too much time with this one. The Minister of Labour, in her comments, felt that she had an ace up her sleeve when she read and quoted from an editorial in my home-town paper, the Hamilton Spectator, because she thought that would embarrass me. That's fair enough. We play for keeps around here. But I would like to return the favour.

The Kitchener-Waterloo Record of October 10 of this year, which is of course the Minister of Labour's hometown newspaper—

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): No.

Mr Christopherson: The member for Nickel Belt says, "No," but it's true. There's something here and I

think in fairness everybody should hear at least a part of this. The opening paragraph is, "The Harris government would do well to use caution in its plan for the wholesale dismantling of labour laws enacted by the former NDP government." Well, well, well.

It goes on to say: "The proposed changes are intended to bring Ontario back to pre-NDP days and they are clearly ideologically driven. The bill's patently political title, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and promote economic prosperity, tells us that."

This is the editorial speaking now: "Some of Ontario's largest employers have expressed concerns about the legislation. Chrysler Canada wrote to the Premier asking for a meeting before the legislation proceeded. McDonnell Douglas has now joined the auto maker, pleading for a careful approach to labour reform. That's because labour relations have worked rather well these past few years. The province has enjoyed labour peace, with a minimum of strikes since the NDP's Bill 40 went into effect in January 1993."

I say to my honourable colleague the Minister of Labour, people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

Moving on, I want to talk to some of the substantive parts of Bill 7, although Lord knows there could never be enough debate to cover all of it, given the size and dimension of the legislation that you're proposing. I keep holding it up because indeed it is probably one of the largest pieces of legislation that we've seen in this place in a long, long time, which adds further testimony to the fact that you're taking us back decades in labour relations.

1750

But let's look at the purpose clause. The current law provides that one purpose is "to provide for effective, fair and expeditious methods of dispute resolution." Sounds reasonable. Bill 7 changes that, though. There's obviously some deep-rooted evil in "effective, fair," because it is eliminated from Bill 7. We don't have "effective" and "fair." What happened to "effective" and "fair"? What is so evil about a purpose clause saying that you're going "to provide for effective, fair and expeditious methods of dispute resolution"?

Interjection: That's a drafting error.

Mr Duncan: A drafting error.

Mr Christopherson: No, no. "That's a drafting error," my friends beside me say. That is entirely possible. All the more reason why it would pay you to get out there and debate this bill in the communities. But it really does make one wonder when the government stands up and—

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: Here we go again. See, this is where the cracks are going to show, folks, and this is why you're afraid to go out in the province.

The fact is that there weren't the mammoth job losses that you said there'd be; there wasn't the disaster you said there would be. None of that is true. Yet when we start to look at what's really in Bill 7, we find out that you take out "effective" and "fair." What is it about those

two words that gives the Harris government so much difficulty?

I'm not hearing anything from the government benches. You're usually very quick to respond when you're given an opportunity. It's because you can't defend it. In fact, you can't defend most of this bill. It's built on untruths. It's built on rhetoric. That's why we want to get out in the province and talk to the people. And we're only at the purpose clause.

Let's move on. So much to cover and so little time. The wage protection program. This government—

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Why don't you talk about democracy in the workplace?

Mr Christopherson: The Attorney General heckles me from across the way, saying, "Let's talk about workplace democracy." That's part 2. I don't have time today, but we're going to get to workplace democracy, because there's nothing more hideous than the idea that Tories would tell workers what workplace democracy is all about.

Let's talk about the wage protection program. This is a program that is not geared to unions and unionized workers only; this is a program, a benefit, a right, a protection, for all workers in the province of Ontario. Basically, it says that if a corporation or an office closes or goes bankrupt or relocates—and I would argue a lot of that's happened because of the free trade agreements that we've seen. However, that's another debate.

Here's a program that said to workers, "For too long now, if a corporation goes bankrupt and they owed you wages and vacation and termination and severance pay, you lose them." This program said: "We're going to change that. We're going to give workers the right to protection for wages that they've earned."

I would have thought that most of the Tories wouldn't have had problems with that. It seems to me that's like a key work-ethic-type issue that you ought to be very comfortable with. But instead, after you give us your patronizing speech about the debt and deficit and how it's okay to take money away from poor people because the deficit and debt and your 30% tax cut, to be precise, are more important, you've taken away some of the rights and protection that workers had here.

How does that equate? How is it fair that you're going to give back a 30% tax cut and you say it's okay to take away the termination pay and the severance pay and limit the amount of wages that workers can recover when, through no fault of their own, their job is gone? How do you equate that?

You don't. You don't equate that. It speaks very

directly to the mean-spirited, anti-worker agenda, and I'm not going to back away from those rather harsh words, because that's the truth and that's the reality. If you had the guts to go out in the province of Ontario and talk to the communities you'd find that out.

So you now have said, with this legislation, that if you're owed severance pay—contracts, remember? You guys like contracts: a contract with America, a contract with Ontario. You have a contract with an employer and you work and you're entitled to those wages because they're two or three weeks behind because the company is quickly slipping into bankruptcy. You've now said that having protection of up to \$5,000 is too generous. Workers shouldn't have that much protection. I don't know why else you would do it, except of course you have to pay for your tax cut, but you said: "Five thousand's too generous. Workers shouldn't have that much protection. They should only have \$2,000 protection."

In the case of severance pay and termination you've said, "We can't afford it as a province." That's the answer. You've said, "We can't afford it." Go tell that to the worker who lost his job, who still has to make mortgage payments, who still has to put clothes on the backs of his kids. You go tell them that it's okay to take away what they're owed because we can't afford it collectively.

Yet we know that if you're making \$150,000 in this province, not only have you not been touched but you're going to get a nice big, fat tax cut. Isn't that great? Isn't that great, unless you're that worker who's had a right taken away. You cannot defend that on any ground that I can think of; ideologically or otherwise you cannot. It stands side by side with what you did to disabled workers who were injured on the job when you said, "We as a province can't afford to give you the benefits you were receiving even though you were hurt on the job and it's no fault of your own because we've got a deficit problem, we've got to give a big tax cut to our wealthy friends, so we're going to cut your benefits." This stands side by side. It has the same impact on workers, it's generated from the same agenda and it'll have the same result, and the result is an Ontario with legislation that is anti-worker.

I want to begin my comments on replacement workers and I would seek guidance from the Speaker in terms of whether he wants me to do that or—we're a couple of minutes from adjourning the House; I'm in your hands, Speaker.

The Speaker: It's almost 6 of the clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands /	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kingston et Les Îles	
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener	Wettiaufer, Wayne (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barb (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
	without Portfolio (Workers' Compensation Board) /	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
	ministre sans portefeuille, ministre responsable de	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, Leo (PC)
	la Commission des accidents du travail	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Solicitor
Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister		General and Minister of Correctional Services /
	of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre		solliciteur général et ministre des Services
	de la Consommation et du Commerce		correctionnels
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)		of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)		for women's issues / ministre des Affaires
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Chair of the		intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la
	Management Board of Cabinet / président du		Condition féminine
	Conseil de gestion	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Minister
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)		of Community and Social Services / ministre des
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	A 42 1 11	Services sociaux et communautaires
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	Ecker, Janet (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)		Education and Training / ministère de l'Education et de la Formation
Eglinton	Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC) Minister	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
	of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism /	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Rob (PC)
	ministre du Développement économique, du	Muskoka-Georgian Bay /	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
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Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Chris (PC)		ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition /	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
	chef de l'opposition	Northumberland	
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oakville South / -Sud	Galt, Doug (PC) Carr, Gary (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)		
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Oakwood Oriole	Colle, Mike (L) Caplan, Elinor (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of		
	Environment and Energy / ministre de	Oshawa Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
II the Combine to Combine	l'Environnement et de l'Energie		Patten, Richard (L)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Haiton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L)
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)	Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)	Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)

Parry Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier,	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
	Minister of Finance, government House leader / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances,	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
	leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Simcoe Centre / -Centre Simcoe East / -Est	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K. (PC) Speaker /
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	Président
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Health /
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Sillicoe West / -Odest	ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell /	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prescott et Russell		Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Prince Edward-Lennox-	Fox, Gary (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
South Hastings /	ton, dary (to)	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of
Prince Edward-Lennox-		Violenta Hamburton	Natural Resources, Minister of Northern
Hastings-Sud			Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)		naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND)		des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)		Labour / ministre du Travail
S-D-G & East Grenville /	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister	Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
	responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
	l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
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Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York South / -Sud	Rae, Bob (ND) Leader of the New Democratic
Scarborough-Ellesmere	Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of		Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
3	Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des	Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
	Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs		

Constituency

Circonscription

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Member/Party

Député(e) / Parti

Constituency

Circonscription

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

Member/Party

Député(e) / Parti







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No. 15



Nº 15

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First Session, 36th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 24 October 1995

Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 24 octobre 1995



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 octobre 1995

The House met at 1332. Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS DIMITRIJA TRAJCESKI

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Today, I stand before this House with deep sadness to express, on behalf of the citizens of Metro Toronto and the province, our deepest sympathies to the family of Jimmy Trajceski, whose life was taken by a senseless and cowardly act at the Victoria Park subway station early yesterday morning. Mr Trajceski leaves behind his wife, Cvetanka, his son Elvis, his daughter, Marianna, and countless family and friends.

In 1966, Mr Trajceski immigrated from the republic of Macedonia to Canada with a dream of making a good life for his family. He was known by all as a loving husband and father who dedicated his life to his family and to serving the public.

Employed by the TTC since 1973, Mr Trajceski was a model employee, always available to help out in any way he could. Jimmy was one of the many TTC front-line workers who served to make our public transit system one of the best in the world. He will be dearly missed by all his co-workers and the thousands of people he helped through his everyday work.

This cruel twist of fate leaves us all wondering why: Why does this family have to suffer such a loss? Why did this have to happen? There are no answers and no words that can be spoken here today to ease the sorrow of the Trajceski family, for only time, hopefully, can heal their pain.

Once again, on behalf of everyone, I'd like to express condolences to the Trajceski family.

AIR QUALITY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): This week, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment is meeting in Whitehorse to discuss a proposed tough new national policy on auto emission standards. This meeting couldn't be more timely.

On Friday, Pollution Probe alerted us to the increasing human health risk posed by dangerously high levels of smog. In fact, smog alerts are up 150% over last summer. More disturbingly, Pollution Probe, as well as health officials at the city of Toronto, believe these alerts are being triggered at a higher rate than they should be. We simply shouldn't be inhaling the amount of pollution that we currently are, as evidenced by increasing hospital admissions for respiratory disorders.

The adoption of tougher standards should also enjoy the unqualified support of the ministers of Health and Finance. Research prepared for the ministers' environment council—their own figures—shows that new, tougher standards could reduce health costs by \$10 billion

to \$30 billion over the next 25 years and save 3,600 lives. The point is simply this: The quality of the air we breathe is getting worse and our health is being increasingly compromised.

A current Environics survey shows 78% of Canadians believe that environmental regulations should be strictly enforced. I'm sure that would be even higher where human health is at stake.

HUGH O'NEIL

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): I rise today to bring to the attention of members of the House a party that is going on tonight for a Liberal member who has retired after 20 years serving the Quinte riding, in the person of Mr Hugh O'Neil.

After 20 years of holding different offices in this House, we know the kind of work that he did. I know this is not a member of our party, but I certainly throw him all the bouquets I can throw him, because he was certainly a super individual, in taking over the offices that he had after the election.

The party tonight is at 6 o'clock in Trenton. Some of you people I know are going down to be with him and his family in his retirement time. Once again, I'd just like to congratulate Hugh on the work he's done for the riding and the province of Ontario.

MARVELLE KOFFLER BREAST CENTRE

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I'm disappointed that the Minister of Health has not acknowledged Breast Cancer Awareness Week with a statement in this House. So today I speak on behalf of my constituents and the minister, I'm sure, as I rise in the House today to celebrate the official opening of the Marvelle Koffler Breast Centre.

The opening was held last evening at Mount Sinai Hospital. The opening of this facility is a very special achievement. The \$2.8-million facility was built without any capital resources from the government.

Marvelle Koffler is a breast cancer survivor. She has shown great courage and determination in battling this disease. The centre is a tribute to her courage and is a result of her leadership and the generosity of Marvelle and her husband, Murray, their friends and wonderful family.

Offering the latest outpatient treatment, surgical techniques for breast cancer, breast disease diagnosis, early detection, education and support, the Marvelle Koffler Breast Centre sets a new standard for care of breast disease in North America. It combines surgical expertise and the latest in breast imaging services with integrated psychosocial support services. The integrated services provided at the centre make the Marvelle Koffler Breast Centre unique in Canada and will provide patients

with the nurturing, care and treatment that will help them deal with this dreaded disease.

My congratulations to Dr Pamela Goodwin, the advisory committee members, of which I'm proud to be a part, and the staff at Mount Sinai Hospital who provided support, expertise and encouragement. The centre is an innovative new bright light and a beacon of hope for all those fighting a dreaded disease, breast cancer.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Last week, in response to a question from our leader, the Premier suggested that economist after economist agreed with this government's economic and fiscal plan. The Premier said, and I quote from the Hansard record of Wednesday, October 18, "I agree with the Canadian Labour Congress senior economist Kevin Hayes that, if we want jobs in the province...and that's what we were elected for, we must encourage consumer confidence."

I rise to correct the record of this House. With respect to this remark, it was made in direct response to a question to the Premier on the wisdom of the government's planned tax cut. The tax cut contemplated by this government would benefit only the wealthiest of this province. Mr Harris's tax cut would give someone with an income of \$100,000 over 10 times as much as someone with an income of \$25,000. In fact, two thirds of the total value of the tax cut would go to only the top 10% of income earners.

We've spoken to Mr Hayes about his comments that were reported, and I want to say that the Premier got it wrong. What he actually said was, "There's this theory floating around that you can somehow have an economic recovery without improving the income of workers.... But it's impossible."

He goes on to point out, "The federal and provincial governments are also contributing by both cutting jobs and rolling back wages" in many cases.

The Premier got it wrong. The Premier is also wrong in saying economist after economist is supporting him.

What the government needs to do is have a plan for jobs. The government seems to think people will spend money in the hope of creating jobs for themselves. It's not common sense; it's nonsense.

1340

NORM KELLY

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): I rise today to recognize Mr Norm Kelly, Metro councillor for the riding of Scarborough Wexford, who is seated in the members' gallery.

Councillor Norm Kelly has served the residents of Scarborough with dedication and commitment for many years. Councillor Kelly served three terms as alderman for the borough of Scarborough during the 1970s and 1980s. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1980 as member of Parliament for the riding of Scarborough Centre.

And now, after a number of years in the private sector, he has returned to serve the residents of Scarborough after his election to Metro council in last November's municipal elections.

Like the Premier, Councillor Kelly is dedicated to eliminating waste, mismanagement and duplication in government. And like the Premier, Councillor Kelly wants to provide efficient and cost-effective municipal services without higher taxes.

Please join my in welcoming Councillor Kelly here today.

FOOD SHOPPING LIST

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I'd like to speak about bologna today.

Some people in Mike Harris's Ontario are finding aspects of the Common Sense Revolution a little hard to stomach. So to assist the weak at heart in digesting the Tories' recipe for disaster, the Minister of Community and Social Services has served up a \$90-a-month meal plan, which at less than \$1 per meal consists primarily of a lot of wishful thinking.

Despite reports that there is little value in the Tsubouchi diet, either nutritionally or otherwise, the Premier himself has shown support for the plan by stating that he knows what it's like to live on a diet of baked beans and bologna. That's why he worked so hard to get ahead.

Well, flavourful tales of the Premier once living on a lemonade budget have turned sour by accounts of a younger Mike Harris's champagne lifestyle. It now appears that bologna was never a popular dish in the Harris household, which, according to some sources, resembled the Royal York at dinnertime. As a result, today the Premier's eating his words along with his fictional diet.

The Premier's right about one thing, however: He's full of baloney. We just wish he and his Minister of Community and Social Services would stop serving it up to the province of Ontario. We find the whole thing unpalatable.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Today, we have yet another transfer from Brian Mulroney to the Mike Harris government, another individual who lived off the taxpayers of Canada courtesy of Brian Mulroney in Ottawa and who will now be living off the taxpayers of Ontario courtesy of Premier Harris.

I am referring to one Dan MacDonald, who two weeks ago was appointed to the Social Assistance Review Board, where he will receive in the neighbourhood of \$65,000 a year, plus expenses, from Ontario taxpayers while children on social assistance in Ontario go to bed hungry.

What are Mr MacDonald's qualifications? What experience does he have that would prepare him to exercise judgement on an important quasi-judicial body?

In 1987, Mr MacDonald was the Mulroney candidate in a Hamilton Centre by-election. He came third, barely winning 15% of the vote. From there, Mr MacDonald was off to Ottawa to perform a variety of tasks for Brian Mulroney. His occupation, we are told, was that of an organizer for the Mulroney government. The Mulroney government then appointed Mr MacDonald to a position at the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. Now

Mr MacDonald comes here from Brian Mulroney to the Mike Harris government to live off Ontario.

The people of Ontario were told the Harris government was different. What we see are the worst excesses, the worst examples of the discredited Mulroney regime being repeated by this government.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It gives me great pleasure to rise today in this House. I would like to recognize the presence in the Legislature of the family of page Jonathan Helmus, from Knox Christian Elementary School, located in my riding of Durham East.

On September 27, the throne speech signified newness: a new government, new MPPs, new cabinet and a very special group of new faces, those of the legislative pages.

The page program is a wonderful opportunity for students in grades 7 and 8 who achieve 80% or more in their marks to gain knowledge of government and to learn, first hand from the other pages, the geography of Ontario.

It provides the schools that send a page to Queen's Park exposure through name recognition and the opportunity to have the page share his or her experience with fellow students.

As this first group of pages are soon to end their term and return to their homes, I hope they will return to their communities with good stories about the activities and behaviour in this Legislature.

Please join with me in acknowledging the contribution they have made to this Legislature and to thank them.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today the Honourable John MacEachern, MLA, Minister of Education for the province of Nova Scotia. Please join me in welcoming our guest.

ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Yesterday, several members raised the issue of security. I would like to respond by reiterating that security of the legislative precinct is the responsibility of the Speaker. I share many of the concerns over security matters that have been raised and I understand the need to consult fully with the members of this House. It is for this reason that I am anxious to have the membership of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly struck, and hopeful that when it is, it will make the consideration of this issue of security a priority.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Yesterday, the member for Windsor-Riverside (Mr Cooke) rose on a point of order with respect to the committee membership motion.

This matter was raised on October 18, 1995, and I refer members to my ruling of that same date. Let me clarify by saying that the Speaker does not have any authority to compel this House to consider a certain item at orders of the day.

I again urge the acting government House leader to discuss this matter with the members opposite to come to a quick resolution of this problem.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGE

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Yesterday, the member for Mississauga South (Mrs Marland) rose on a point of privilege with respect to the television cameras in the gallery. I find that the member does not have a prima facie point of privilege; however, the member may wish to bring this matter to the attention of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly for its consideration.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ROAD SAFETY

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): In July, we announced that we would introduce comprehensive plans for road safety. Premier Harris requested plans from me and my colleagues the Solicitor General and Attorney General.

Starting immediately, we will improve driver behaviour by making enforcement more effective, getting drunk drivers off the road and making trucks safer. Bottom line, this plan is about getting tough on dangerous drivers and vehicles.

My priority is truck safety. To raise the profile of safety in the industry, I am pleased to announce that we will rate the safety performance of all truck operators and we will make these ratings available to the public and to anyone thinking of doing business with a particular trucking firm.

We will prepare for full enforcement of weight laws for gravel trucks. We are lifting the axle weight moratorium put in place by a previous government.

The most common safety defect is brakes out of adjustment. We will train commercial drivers to adjust their own brakes. This mandatory program will train drivers to adjust their own brakes rather than having to go to a mechanic.

We will set up a system of electronic monitoring to make trucking safe and efficient, and reward good drivers and operators with fewer inspection stops.

And, working with the trucking industry, the government will explore options for training and licensing truck wheel installers. We will also look closely at the recommendations of the inquest into truck wheel separation.

Within 12 months, my ministry will report back with the recommendations on increased penalties, including demerit points for drivers of unsafe trucks, better driver training for passenger and commercial vehicles, and a form of graduated licensing for truck and bus drivers.

My colleague the Attorney General will announce drinking and driving measures, and the Solicitor General will be announcing enhancement to enforcement.

Government's responsibility is to make sure everything we do in road safety is fair and that it works. These action plans meet the standard, they are fair, and they have the potential to save lives. Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): As the minister responsible for the drinking-driving countermeasures program, I am pleased to join with the Minister of Transportation and the Solicitor General to announce our new proposals which meet our commitment to improve road safety in Ontario.

Drinking and driving is the number one cause of criminal death and injury in our society, and alcohol is the greatest single factor contributing to automobile accidents in Ontario.

In 1993 alcohol was involved in 42% of Ontario's motor vehicle fatalities. During that year, 565 persons died in alcohol-related crashes and more than 26,000 drivers were charged with impaired driving. Of all impaired driving convictions, 63% were for a second, third or subsequent offence.

Every year drinking and driving costs Ontarians \$1.3 billion in personal financial loss, medical expenses and property damage. But no amount of money can measure the tragedy and suffering imposed on the innocent victims of this crime. The deadly impact of drinking and driving on victims is unacceptable.

To stop the suffering, we have developed a strategy to further reduce impaired driving in our province. Shortly we will be introducing the administrative licence suspension, a measure that will get drunk drivers off the roads and ensure that this form of dangerous driving is dealt with swiftly and surely. Administrative licence suspension has a proven track record of reducing alcohol-related crashes, deaths and injuries by up to 50%. Forty US states, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have adopted it; British Columbia has introduced legislation and Quebec is considering the proposal.

Drunk drivers will have their licences suspended immediately for 90 days by the registrar of motor vehicles if their blood alcohol concentration is higher than the legal limit. The suspension will be an administrative procedure separate and apart from any criminal charges and will include an appeal provision. This process will ensure that the constitutional rights of drivers will be protected.

This is an issue that has been discussed previously in this House. Our administrative licence suspension plan is quite different from past initiatives. We have addressed previous concerns that were raised. This plan ensures due process for Ontarians. The suspension will be carried out by the motor vehicle registrar, and not the police. In addition, to further ensure the fairness of Ontarians, there is an appeal process built into the suspension plan.

We are also introducing increased yet flexible suspensions, a measure that will allow the courts to increase punishment to fit the crime. With this new proposal, the minimum suspension after conviction could be increased from the current 12 months to up to 18 months for more serious cases.

The measures I've outlined today will allow us to send a clear message to everyone that drinking and driving in Ontario will not be tolerated, and that this government is serious about road safety. Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): It gives me great pleasure to join my colleagues the Minister of Transportation and the Attorney General in announcing government initiatives which will have an immediate and positive impact upon road safety in Ontario.

Providing police officers with the tools for effective traffic law enforcement is a key to road safety. I am pleased to inform you that three OPP traffic management teams, which have been operating on a temporary basis since July of this year, will be continued.

The OPP Road Rangers, as they have been dubbed, are doing an outstanding job. Each of the teams will continue to have nine OPP officers assigned to it and will operate in the greater Toronto and central regions. Within a year, two additional teams will be implemented, one in southeastern and one in southwestern Ontario. These units will continue to target unsafe driving practices, including speeding, impaired driving, tailgating, improper lane changes and any other driving behaviours by motorists that put themselves and other road users at risk.

These OPP officers will also continue to provide drivers with advice and counselling on entering and exiting highways, proper licensing for drivers and vehicles, and properly fitted seatbelts.

Also being implemented is a self-reporting process for motor vehicle collisions. Motorists involved in collisions in OPP jurisdictions, where no serious damage or personal injury has occurred, will be able to report the details to a collision reporting centre or OPP detachment. This will enable more efficient use of valuable police resources to areas where they are most needed.

The RIDE program has been effective in changing the public's attitude towards the criminal behaviour of drinking drivers. I'm pleased to announce that \$1.2 million will continue to be made available to municipal police services to conduct RIDE spot checks. We are providing this support to the RIDE program in spite of considerable financial constraints faced by this government.

I am confident that these initiatives will bring significant positive change to the driving behaviours of motorists and will go a long way to improving overall safety on our roads.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I find some of the announcement of the Minister of Transportation very contradictory, at best. Certainly we all concur that something dramatic has to be done to restore the public sense of safety on our highways, but I find this statement lacking, especially in terms of being comprehensive.

Does your idea of safety not include snow clearing, snowplowing, sanding and salting? How can you say you're taking safety seriously when you've eliminated the emergency patrol from the highways in the GTA? You didn't even make an announcement about that. I think your ministry, Minister, should be obliged to disclose any cutbacks you've made to safety since you've been there and not try to sneak those cutbacks by.

I hope you're not trying to put money into the initiatives in this announcement that you've taken out of the

snowplowing, snow clearing, sanding and salting budget or the emergency patrol budget; that you took it out of there to put it into this announcement.

It is not comprehensive, because truck safety is only one part of it. We're looking at the condition of the roads, we're looking at the speed, we're looking at a whole variety of issues that deal with road safety. You can't say you're going to have safer roads when, with the cutbacks to GO Transit and public transit, you're pushing more cars on to the highways.

How can this be a comprehensive announcement? You're not getting tough with anything. And you say you're going to wait a year before you're going to start punishing the violators. Why wait a year? Why not do it now, if you're serious about it?

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I look at the Solicitor General's announcement today with great interest: the increasing of the OPP Road Rangers throughout, now, southwestern Ontario and southeastern Ontario. I find it passing strange, as his boss the Premier would say, when he at the same time is eliminating 700 clerical jobs throughout the province in the OPP.

It would seem to us that this burden of paperwork is now going to fall upon the very highly trained and professional police force we have here in Ontario, and it's going to be very difficult for him to expand services like this while he's making these \$17-million cuts in the OPP.

It also is contrary to what was stated during the election of last June in the Common Sense Revolution, that the Tory government, besides not cutting into health care and education, would also make sure that there were no cuts in police services in Ontario, yet we continue to see cuts.

So while it is good to make sure that we have the coverage on the roads with the OPP Road Rangers throughout the province, I tell the minister that he should use great caution in reducing the strength of our OPP, to make sure that public security and safety is maintained throughout this province.

1400

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): In response to the statement by the Attorney General, I must tell him how pleased I am that the work that has been done over a number of years by the countermeasures office in his ministry has finally come to fruition. I know that some of the staff are in the gallery, and this is indeed a happy day for them.

Last year, when the member for Mississauga South presented a private member's bill in this Legislature around suspension of licences, our government offered to the then House leader exactly this program of administrative licence suspension and offered to support that part of her bill. We were turned down. I am delighted to see that the Attorney General has managed to convince his colleagues that this is indeed a very important way to keep drunk drivers off the road, that it will stand up to constitutional challenge. I am very, very pleased to see it put into place. I think one of the things we know about Ontarians is that they will not tolerate drunk driving. This

is indeed a positive measure, and I congratulate the minister.

To the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, this is good news and bad news. It's good news that you're continuing the RIDE funding that our government put in place, because you're right: It has been very effective, and it is something that municipalities identify as being very important in their efforts to control drunk driving and to provide safety on the roads.

However, I would say to the member that the cancellation of photo-radar, the control of speed through photo-radar, is one of the black marks on the government's record. Indeed, it would have provided the OPP and policing services with the kind of technology they need to meet the cuts that my colleague the member for Timiskaming was mentioning.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): It's one of those occasions when we're focused, each and every one of us, on what to do vis-à-vis truck safety. The member opposite, the honourable minister, has risen above party politics, and we fully support his endeavour vis-à-vis truck safety. He is very much aware that it's an ongoing, evolving process.

All three parties have had some concern. Truck traffic has more than doubled in the past seven years; people insist on necessity and convenience, door-to-door delivery, just-in-time delivery, which is more economical and makes good business sense.

Yet, on this day for celebration, I find myself in a somewhat uncomfortable position, for I have just received yet another leak from the ministry. This one says, "Patrol staff reduction: 76 men and women will lose their jobs." This is related to safety, so you have a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde. Which one is it, Minister, surfacing here?

When I was the minister, Ben Johnson had just set the world record as the fastest human being. There was the rumour of a leak in my ministry, and I beat his record after question period going back to my office.

Cuts of \$6.5 million: That's the reality. Last week it was revealed that \$6.5 million in terms of winter maintenance and programs was chopped off, which means you will scare the living daylights out of motorists. There are fewer people on patrol, not as many sanders, and patrol has been reduced by eight hours per day.

Then we hear—and under other circumstances it would have been comical, to say the least, farcical—the cellular phone issue: that if you're in trouble as a motorist, you just pick up a cellular. That's what the minister said. Well, I have one.

Interjections.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I thought you gave that up.

Mr Pouliot: Yes, I have a cellular phone. I was in my riding last week and it didn't ring, so it must have been Palladini calling.

We do encourage the minister in his endeavour, and if he needs to consult, should he do it by fax, I want to wish him well.

ORAL QUESTIONS ROAD SAFETY

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Minister of Transportation. The minister today has addressed one issue of road safety which is of concern, but he has completely failed to address, over a series of days, another issue of safety which is of growing concern. That, of course, is the issue of winter road safety, an issue which members of our caucus have now raised on several occasions.

The minister has told this House that there will be no change to the services and to the level of safety that will be offered on Ontario roads this winter. In fact, Minister, your exact words were, "Our standards have not changed," yet yesterday you told this House that budget cuts for winter road maintenance will take effect on November 13, which just happens to be the date when road crews go on winter standby.

Minister, would you please explain to this Legislature what exactly these cuts to take effect on November 13 will be, and will you tell us how you plan to maintain the same standard of safety when you are making cuts?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): Again I would like to reassure this House and the honourable member that public safety is the number one priority for this government. And yes, madam, the standards have not changed; it's how we deliver the standards. We are going to get a bigger bang for our buck because we are going to do business in a smart way, contrary to the way it used to be done.

Mrs McLeod: This minister somewhat triumphantly told this House yesterday that any accidents that occur on roads in the north could not yet be blamed on cuts because the cuts hadn't taken effect, that they would not take effect till November 13. I want to know what cuts are going to take effect on November 13.

Last week, Minister, government documents were released which seemed to outline the cuts you were planning, and I would remind you of those: that the number of sand spreaders is being reduced, the number of snowplows is being cut, you're slashing the number of seasonal employees by 125, and you're reducing road patrols from three to just two, which means that staff won't be on the road 24 hours to monitor conditions.

Minister, these are not frivolous expenses or some kind of administrative extravagance. The sand spreaders are there, obviously, because sand adds traction and that cuts down on accidents. The snowplows are out to clear roads, and that prevents accidents and deaths. I suggest to you that the magnitude of the cuts you're planning is devastating and that they will jeopardize road safety if they are indeed implemented on November 13.

Minister, can you confirm that those are indeed the cuts that are coming on November 13, and if so, how can you say that cuts of this magnitude will not affect service and safety on our highways?

Hon Mr Palladini: This government is going to be spending \$130 million to ensure that our roads are safe in the wintertime. I said earlier that this government is committed to doing more for less. We are going to hire

for normal, average snowfall, and we have the flexibility to react if there is a major snowstorm. This government will have the flexibility to react and make sure that Ontarians do get the service they want.

Mrs McLeod: This minister is simply sticking to a script. He's sticking to a script that's been written for him which is absolutely meaningless, because he just can't have it both ways. Minister, you cannot take sanders off the road, you can't take snowplows off the road, you can't take the patrols off the highways and still maintain existing standards. In fact, the member for Port Arthur has been advised by municipal officials that they're very concerned that the ministry is going to go to maintaining many roads only in centre-bare condition over the course of this winter.

I want the minister to know, just so you understand, Minister, that in northern Ontario we don't have any four-lane highways, so if you go to centre-bare, that means one-lane highways in wintertime, and one-lane highways mean head-on collisions when we have accidents in the wintertime.

Then we heard the Minister of Education, who yesterday did not deny that he had suggested that the way to ensure the safety of northern Ontario school children in the wintertime was to make all your cuts out of southern Ontario road safety.

1410

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: I suggest to you that this will be completely unacceptable for people in southwestern Ontario who have to negotiate snowbelt conditions on the 401, or for motorists who drive Highway 400 near Barrie, or for people in eastern Ontario who often face very severe winter conditions.

The Speaker: Would you put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: We cannot afford any reduction in service, Minister, and I ask you, will you revoke the cuts that are planned for November 13 in order to guarantee the same level of service and the same level of safety on Ontario's roads this winter?

Hon Mr Palladini: I would like to once again say that we are spending \$130 million towards making sure that our roads are safe and we have the flexibility to react. We will monitor the snowbelt areas and the proper safety standards will be applicable.

I would like to inform the honourable member that this is a practice, as far as what she was saying earlier about cutting down the service hours, that's already in place, and including your home town.

Mrs McLeod: I sincerely hope that the minister's monitoring does not consist of monitoring the number of accidents in a snowstorm.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I will place my second question to the minister responsible for women's issues. I want to return to the issue of your government's cuts to second-stage housing.

You have in the past insisted that the cuts to secondstage housing are not going to hurt women and that because the funding for emergency shelters remains, there's absolutely nothing for anyone to worry about. I really want to know if you and the Minister of Community and Social Services, who has said the same thing, really understand the difference between second-stage housing and emergency shelters.

Surely you know that an emergency shelter provides the accommodation, the protection, the shelter when women and children have had to flee an abusive home.

The second-stage housing is the accommodation that they go to when their time at the shelter has run out, and that's where they receive the help they need to establish independent lives, to get a job, to re-establish a home for themselves and their children. It's the second-stage housing that provides day care for the children so they can go out and get a job, it's second-stage housing that helps them get the job skills and it's second-stage housing that provides the security systems to ensure their personal safety. If you take away the counselling and the support—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: —and the security, all you're left with is an apartment building.

Does the minister understand that without counselling and security and other services, a second-stage housing building is just a building, it is not a route to independence?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): To the honourable member, we of course understand the difference. I don't actually agree with your opening statement; they were not words that could have been attributed to us.

I think most people in Ontario right now are concerned about their families; this isn't new. What we're trying to do is to reassure them that the second-stage housing will be there. We will provide the support for administration and security. We've said that from the beginning, and we're working on some of the individual projects with those communities now.

Mrs McLeod: The minister makes my point exactly. When you take away the counselling and the support and the security, there is nothing left but an apartment building. The programs are being shut down. There will not be second-stage housing available for women and children in this province.

What's happening in the real world, in a world where this government says these programs are not being closed, is that at the Emily Murphy Centre in Stratford, the staff received their pink slips this morning. They've been told to do an inventory of their assets—their furniture, the toys, the books—and come up with a plan for selling them. That means that the 18 women and the 16 children living there will be on their own from now on.

So I ask you again, Minister, do you understand that without counselling and support services, this centre, the Emily Murphy Centre in Stratford, simply becomes a place to live and the women and children who are living

there will not get any help as they struggle to rebuild their lives after escaping an abusive situation?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: We're very much aware of the Emily Murphy shelter in Stratford. We know that across the province there are situations like the Emily Murphy Centre in Stratford. We are also very much aware that we have not cut, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has not cut, the counselling programs. We still have \$15.7 million to spend across this province.

Many communities—and I'm not sure of Stratford—are working very hard to save some counselling to support the second-stage housing. But I will repeat, the responsibility for the second-stage housing—it's housing after the emergency housing, that is a place where women can go to feel secure and to work towards getting more independent—they will have counselling from within their own community. There will be services available, and it's up to the local communities to work very hard to make it work, as we are attempting to do in our community in London and elsewhere across the province.

Mrs McLeod: Again, those are empty words. It sounds good, but it's not really happening in the real world; it's not happening in communities across this province. As the Ministry of Community and Social Services cuts out the funding, there is nothing left and there's nobody to step into the gap.

Let me ask you if you're aware of the situation with the South and Metcalfe Non-Profit Housing Corp in Simcoe. They received a letter from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and, despite all the protests to the contrary, this letter confirms that their second-stage housing funding has been eliminated: not protected, not cut, but eliminated.

The letter provides instructions for closing down the agency's services, how to lay off the staff, how to wind up the services, how to dispose of the assets. This letter also confirms that the only funding considered core is the funding that comes from the Ministry of Housing.

I'm astonished by the minister's insistence that an apartment building can still be considered second-stage housing when there are not the support services to help people re-establish their lives.

Will you at least acknowledge that the only thing that you consider to be core funding is money for bricks and mortar, and that bricks and mortar alone don't do much for these women and children, and will you admit that without funding for counselling and support services these women won't get the help they need?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: This government, in the last campaign, committed to providing core services. We, in fact, are providing the core services in both the shelters and the second-stage housing. We will admit—if, in fact, you are listening—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: —that administrative and security services are important.

The Leader of the Opposition is saying, "What counselling?" There are counselling services across this province. Every community will have to work to make

certain that the women in second-stage housing receive the counselling services they need from within the budgets.

It is not gone across the province, and I will remind the members of this House that we are working on an individual basis—for those who are listening—within their own communities to provide the counselling services. There are some success stories, and we hope that there will be more, where communities are working together with \$15.8 million left in counselling services for the women of this province in shelter housing and in second-stage housing.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I've a couple of questions for the Premier in the absence, again, of the Minister of Community and Social Services. I'd like to quote again, from the October 3, 1995, Hansard of this year, the Minister of Community and Social Services:

"I had some research done to indicate how and whether or not someone who is a sole single on benefits or a single parent with a child—" and he goes on to say: "we've actually provided a budget here.... I have it here in this binder. I'd be willing to share it with the leader of the third party."

Yesterday the Premier was asked this question, and I ask it again today: Is the Premier prepared—because he said yesterday he would check with the minister's office—is the Premier willing today to table both the budget for singles on social assistance, not the doctored document that was provided last week but the budget that he had in his binder that day, plus the budget for a single with a child?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): As I indicated yesterday, I'm prepared to share with the member everything that I have, and I've done so, that is there. The minister, as I indicated, is in eastern Ontario, and is meeting with front-line workers, was on an open-line radio show this morning in the Ottawa region and hearing from people across the province, and I believe will be back tomorrow.

1420

But let me say this: What I hear the member saying is, "Shame on the minister for caring and trying to help." You know, Mr Speaker, we inherited a situation where for the last 10 years, his party and the party previous spent a total of \$40 billion on welfare, never once in that time thinking: "How do we help people get off welfare? How do we get them a job? How do we give them the skills? How do we give them some advice and help in coping in a very difficult situation?" The one program that was in place that the NDP inherited that had been there for a long time to give counselling and advice on budget management you cancelled. You cancelled.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The question's been answered.

Hon Mr Harris: So all I hear from you is criticism for the minister for caring and trying to help when all you did was blow \$40 billion on a failed system.

Mr Cooke: If I really thought the Premier or the minister cared about 400,000 children on social assistance

in this province, I might be willing to accept what he just said. The reality is, there's only one thing that this government's trying to do, and that is to take away from the poorest people in this province and 400,000 children in order to give a tax break to their supporters who make more than \$75,000 a year. That's what it's all about. Don't talk to us about expenditures. You're about to engage in the biggest expenditure in decades, and it's called a \$5-billion tax decrease at the expense of the poor of this province.

My question to the Premier, my second question, is: He was quoted in the Toronto Star at the end of September as saying, and I quote:

"'I don't know,' Harris said when asked if Ontario's new welfare rates give parents enough money to feed their children." Continuing, he says, "Pressed by reporters about whether the new lower welfare rates give poor families enough money to feed their children, Harris said: 'I hope so. I don't know. I'm sure it'll be enough.'"

If that's the case—and this is a question of credibility for the Premier now, because it's his minister—

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mr Cooke: There was a promise made that a budget would be tabled in the House, which would I assume show that kids and families can survive on your new welfare rates. Table the budget. Will you table the budget?

Hon Mr Harris: I'm not exactly sure what budget the member is referring to. But what I can say is this, that I know we are paying on average 10% more than they get in the rest of the provinces; I know we are paying more than any of 50 states; I know we are paying more than most countries in the world; and I know in fact we're paying more than many working low-income people—who are having great difficulty surviving and are very much looking forward to a tax cut so they can keep more of those hard-earned dollars for themselves.

Now I continue to say this, that to hear any member of this Legislature criticize anyone who is trying to offer help, trying to offer advice, trying to get their ministry to offer nutritional information—I mean, example after example.

I know in Cambridge I've read an article here in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record. Here is a Cambridge group coming out with a booklet to help people, not just those on welfare but very hardworking, taxpaying people who in many cases are taking home even less dollars than people on welfare are getting to manage through difficult situations, and I would hope we'd all want to be good neighbours and do everything we could to assist and help.

Mr Cooke: If the Premier is so convinced that the minister is just simply trying to be helpful, then I think those of us on this side of the floor would like to facilitate that, and if he would table the budget that is supposed to be so helpful to the poor in this province and children in this province, why is the Premier stonewalling on behalf of his minister and destroying his own credibility by not tabling a document that his minister promised he would table in this House? Will you fulfil that commitment, or won't you?

Hon Mr Harris: I don't have a document. I have documents that have been provided others, other nutritional information. I have the Canada nutrition guide. Many nutritionists indicated, by the way, that the former document tabled was bang on, spot on, exactly the very minimum requirements, even though, I might add, the amount of money available to a single person is substantially more than the \$75 that somebody did that budget for, or the \$90-odd that the minister indicated.

Quite frankly, I come back to success stories. You know, in Hamilton we have people helping people, community kitchen programs. We have in Cambridge many people on welfare assisting saying, "Yes, this will be difficult, but yes, we can, like other Canadians all across this country, manage on this." Many saying, "We're delighted with the opportunity to be able to earn back the difference without clawback."

So there are great success stories happening. You know why they're happening? Because we're giving people an opportunity, because we're in there trying to help, instead of throwing \$40 billion more down the drain—

The Speaker: Wind up your question.

Hon Mr Harris: —and seeing more people on welfare, more dependence, more people condemned to this cycle of dependency. So there are a lot of success—

The Speaker: Order. New question.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): It is a bad film made by 18th-Century Fox.

The Speaker: The member for Lake Nipigon is out of order.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, I guess the Premier was saying, "I haven't seen the document or I haven't heard of the document and I can't find the minister."

MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): My second question to the Premier is, can the Premier confirm to the House that the contract with the image consultants for the Minister of Community and Social Services is for up to \$25,000 and that the contract was not put out to tender?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I don't have details of the contract. If somebody else has them—I don't know if the Chair of Management Board—so I'll take the question under advisement and would be pleased to provide the minister with any of those details.

I can say this, that when the question was asked yesterday, the member for Beaches-Woodbine continually interjected about the cost of minister's support staff. I think when she left office, she had 32 personal political staff and today her ministry has eight—eight versus 32.

Mr Cooke: I remember in a pre-election debate the Premier, the then leader of the third party, said he wasn't very good with numbers and I think he confirms it every day in the House.

The fact is that the Premier said when they came to office they were going to do everything different; there weren't going to be any kind of these types of expenditures in ministers' offices. We now know that the first

time a minister gets in trouble, instead of accepting the responsibility for that here in the House and looking to someone else to take over that ministry who doesn't need to be trained or retrained, the Premier's solution is to go to an image consultant and to spend taxpayers' money in order to beef up his government.

1430

I'd like to ask the Premier again, when he is cutting social assistance, health services, children's mental health programs, children's aid societies, school boards, all of those fundamental services in this province, how can he justify an untendered contract for \$25,000 for an image consultant for one of his ministers who is in deep trouble in this place?

Hon Mr Harris: I don't believe the consultant hired is an image consultant at all. So let me put that on the record.

Secondly, I know that when our ministers hired anywhere from 25% to 50% of the personal political staff the previous staff had, it was with the understanding that if they needed more help they would come back to us and let us know.

If they needed more advice, if they needed more political staff they would let us know. If they could do it on short-term contracts instead of full-time, \$50,000-, \$60,000-, \$70,000-, \$80,000-a-year jobs, as the previous government did, we encouraged them to do that, up to staffing levels.

I don't know how much the contract is for. I can tell you that all our ministers and staff in the bureaucracy have been told that we have rules for tendering and they must follow those rules. I would assume they've been followed in this case. If they've not, I will want to know why.

Mr Cooke: I just ask the Premier once again to put the \$25,000 in context. Based on the budget or the food list or whatever it was that the minister tabled last week at \$90 a month, the \$25,000 for this image consultant is over 30 years of food for a single person on general welfare assistance.

I ask the Premier again, based on all of his cutbacks that he's imposing on needed social services, on battered women in this province, how can he justify \$25,000? Wouldn't it be cheaper for the taxpayers of this province to fire your Minister of Community and Social Services and get somebody in who can do the job, rather than spending taxpayers' dollars to train this person?

Hon Mr Harris: I'll tell you what would be the absolute, most expensive thing for the taxpayers: That would be to have the NDP back in government. Nothing could be more expensive. Nothing would run up \$10-billion deficits faster, nothing would spend money faster, unless it was the Liberals, who perhaps over their average period of time spent it faster than did the NDP. Nothing would add to ministers' total costs more than going back to the former minister from the NDP government that was there.

Nothing would save taxpayers more money than having the ministers and the cabinet and the party in power that are in power today.

ONTARIO HYDRO SALARIES

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My question, in the absence of the Minister of Environment and Energy, is to the Chair of Management Board. Can the Chair of Management Board confirm that in the summer of 1995 several managers at Ontario Hydro did in fact receive pay raises up to 15%?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The information that I have indeed confirms that about 90 managers associated with the nuclear division of Ontario Hydro have received increases of varying amounts, some as high as 15%, with the average in the 7% to 8% range.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy has already requested Ontario Hydro to provide a full explanation of those increases. I expect that information to be coming in the next short period of time.

Mr Conway: Minister, some three weeks ago the Minister of Energy stood in this House and announced that on behalf of your government there would be a five-year rate freeze at Ontario Hydro, showing that the Harris government was going to set a very clear direction for Hydro expenditure control.

In light of that ministerial statement of three weeks ago, in light of the Premier's clarion call to Tory restraint here this afternoon, much of it directed at some of the most disadvantaged people in this province, will you, on behalf of your government, give a clear undertaking today, consistent with the Premier's view and the Minister of Energy's statement of three weeks ago, that those 15% increases—those increases generally—will be rolled back to the freeze that everyone else has been expected to live with in recent months around here?

Hon David Johnson: Clearly, this government has concern for the increases. We have expressed that concern, through the Ministry of Environment and Energy, to Ontario Hydro. We have requested a full explanation of the increases.

We feel that we are living in an era of restraint. We have inherited, essentially, a \$10.6-billion deficit from the previous government. We have inherited the spending patterns from the Liberal years leading to the deficits of the NDP years, and clearly we are living in an era of restraint.

As the member knows, Ontario Hydro is an arm's-length entity, and we have, through the Ministry of Environment and Energy, asked for details. We will be awaiting those details to see what action is possible.

JOB CREATION

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Premier. Mr Premier, on a number of occasions you've attempted to switch the focus from the adequacy of the survival diet that's been put out there to the notion that people don't have to live like this. In fact, to quote you, you said, "I would advise people to try and work a few hours a week to be able to have more than just a survival diet." You went on to talk about your own period of time on baked beans and bologna, and that you didn't like it and that's why you worked so hard to try and get ahead.

Beyond the fact that this really is an outrageous insult to people who are struggling trying to bring up families when there's an unemployment rate of 9% and they're trying to find jobs, and that it punishes children who don't have choices, I want to talk about the jobs aspect.

I've taken a look at some of the actions of your government, and I total it between 60,000 and 80,000 jobs that you have cut since you've come to government: capital programs, about 8,400 jobs; non-profit housing, 12,000 jobs; Jobs Ontario Training, 30,000 jobs; JumpStart for youth, 10,000; operating dollars, another 8,000 in the OPS; and many more. It's 60,000 to 80,000.

You committed to the creation of 725,000 jobs.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Ms Lankin: If you were to do that, each year you would have to create twice as many jobs as on average over the last 20 years.

I want to ask you: These people you've cut supports to, all of the training programs, all the job creation programs, where do you expect them to find the jobs? How are you and your government going to help these people find the jobs you say they should go out and get in order to feed their kids?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the member's question is a good question, because it gets to the heart of the disaster of the lost decade or the last 10 years and the jobs that were destroyed, the investment that was driven out.

Bill 40 labour legislation sent a signal around the world: "Don't invest in Ontario. Your money's not secure here. Your investment's not secure here." And those are jobs that we lost: private sector jobs, good-paying jobs, high-paying jobs. We've lost even low-paying jobs through the tenure of your administration.

This is the challenge that we face. Clearly, and the Leader of the Opposition, and in fact on many occasions the former Treasurer of the province of Ontario, the leader of the New Democratic Party, after seeing the light, after blowing the budget for the first two years, said: "If we do not get our deficit under control"—you know, when he showed you the film over and over from New Zealand of what happens when people won't lend you any more money—"we won't have any jobs in Ontario." So one of the key areas is getting our expenditures under control.

A second key area is restoring a healthy climate for jobs and investment in the province of Ontario. Our whole agenda is jobs and growth and prosperity and investment, and all of those job creators, those who actually invest five cents of their own money, have told us: "Right on. That's what we need to get the incentive, to get encouragement, to get the stability to invest and create jobs back in Ontario"—

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

Hon Mr Harris: —and that's what we're going to do.

Ms Lankin: I actually expected the mantra of the CSR to be repeated back in answer to that, and it's interesting, because a number of people are starting to

look a little bit deeper at your economic plan and trying

to examine it and understand whether or not in fact it will work.

Let me give you a couple of comments. Carl Sonnen, the president of Informetrica, is quoted as examining the growth rate in the economy that you've predicted and saying that it's quite a conservative estimate, small-c conservative, and even if you get that, it's not going to produce the kind of jobs that you are talking about in your plan. Let me go on to talk about Len Kubas, who's the president of Kubas Consultants, a Toronto retail and consumer research firm. He says that there is no indication of an increase in consumer spending or consumer confidence. In fact, there has been no sign of a psychological boost among either consumers or businesses since the new government came to power armed with pledges of tax cuts and a new economic climate. In fact, he's quoted as saying that—

The Speaker: Would you put your question, please.

Ms Lankin: —if anything, things have gotten worse, and what makes it worse is this fear.

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Sonnen goes on to say that the kind of economic drag from the money you're taking out—

The Speaker: Would you put your question.

Ms Lankin: —of the economy is in fact not going to be made up by the stimulation of your tax cut. Where are the jobs going to come from?

My question, Mr Speaker: The Premier has no jobs plan; he has no workfare plan; he has no workable economic plan. There's no common sense over there. Tell us where the jobs are going to come from for the people you are punishing—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Ms Lankin: —with a welfare diet and those kids who are going to go hungry?

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Premier.

Ms Lankin: Where are those jobs going to come from to feed those kids?

Hon Mr Harris: Economists seem to be like nutritionists: They never seem to agree 100%.

So let me quote CIBC Wood Gundy, "Growth prospects look dim without the aid of tax cuts." Canadian Manufacturers' Association chief economist Jason Myers: "Incomes are falling. The tax bite has been increasing. Consumer and household debt is now more than 100% of personal incomes. In addition to lower interest rates, the cut in personal income taxes promised by the Mike Harris government should help," he said. A University of Toronto economics professor—not widely known for conservative professors, but there are some, I suppose; maybe all are coming around—"Businesses are going to go where taxes are lower over the long term. That's what the Harris government is trying to do."

Last week I quoted a Canadian Labour Congress economist saying the same thing. I've got pages of these. But let me—

Ms Lankin: Oh, did you not hear the correction on the record today? That's twice now, Mr Premier. You're wrong about that.

Hon Mr Harris: For every economist you can quote, I can quote three that say you're wrong. But what's most important is that your record of destroying jobs and moving them out of this province and the deficit proves that you're wrong.

Let me give you a good example: "County welfare rate dips." Eric Frye, director of Hastings county social services, says his staff have indicated that a drop of nearly 1.7% in one month's caseload is due to former social assistance recipients finding work rather than leaving the region or dropping from the rolls. They found work. The system is working and people are getting back to work.

ONTARIO BUSINESS REGISTRATION ACCESS

Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford): I'd like to preface my question, if I may, by simply saying that the Canada that I know and the Canada that I love is a Canada that includes Quebec.

My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. As of yesterday in my riding of Brantford, a new service opened which I understand is going to help entrepreneurs get established in this province. It is called the Ontario business registration access, or OBRA for short.

I understand, Minister, that Brantford's computer workstation is one of several being set up as a network across Ontario. Could the minister please explain to this Legislature exactly what that program is?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): The member for Brantford is always looking out for the small businessmen of Brantford, and I appreciate his question.

Each year 90,000 new businesses start up in Ontario and have to deal with seven to 10 ministries. This particular program allows the businesses to go to one workstation and register in five different ministries. They can register their business name, their retail sales tax name and their employer health tax, their health tax on self-employed and workers' compensation.

It's one-stop shopping put there to help the small businessman. We think it's a great program and we'd like to give some minor, minor appreciation to the previous government on this.

Applause.

Mr Ron Johnson: Could you also explain, Minister, what impact this new service is expected to have for small business in communities such as Brantford, and how it will help eliminate red tape, which, as you very well know, is a big part of our Common Sense Revolution?

Hon Mr Sterling: I appreciate the response I got on my answer to the opening question.

We have opened 17 new stations across the province.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Who opened them?

Hon Mr Sterling: The government. This government opened 17 new stations—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Cochrane South.

Hon Mr Sterling: —since the election, and we hope to have 50 by spring.

This is of much greater importance to people outside the Toronto area, because they don't have the direct access to our business offices down on University Avenue.

Mr Bisson: That's right. That's why we opened it up last February in Timmins. Hey Norm, are you going to go and re-open it?

The Speaker: The member for Cochrane South is out of order.

Hon Mr Sterling: We have a commitment to make this particular program accessible to all of the small businesses across Ontario.

We made a commitment in the June 8 election that we would cut red tape and this is one example of how we're expanding programs in order to do that.

ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My concern today is that this government and the minister responsible do not understand the film industry and the economic impact it has on this province.

This year, the Ontario Film Development Corp has already lost 33% of its budget, and further cuts are pending. Independent television and film production, the portion of the industry assisted by the OFDC and the Ontario film investment program, represent \$501 million. That's more than half a billion dollars in direct spending. The overall industry creates over 35,000 direct jobs, and many more jobs are created in allied industries such as hotels and catering.

To the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation: Your government's first action to the OFDC was to take back all uncommitted funds, a total of 33% of its budget. Minister, surely you are aware that due to the nature of the film industry, the commitment of funds must be made within the next few weeks to schedule production for the spring and summer. If this commitment is not made soon, next year's production and the thousands of jobs that go with it will be cut and lost on the cutting room floor.

Will you give your commitment today that the 1996 OFDC funding is firm?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I thank the honourable member for the question. I think, again, we have to reiterate that government spending has doubled in the last 10 years. This spending crisis left by the previous government required immediate action. If we had not moved to make these cuts immediately, we would be looking at a deficit of more than \$10.9 billion and a further increase in the cost of servicing our debt.

Mr Bartolucci: If the member for Windsor-Sandwich was here today, she'd say you're dancing, Minister. Although that's one of the performing arts, it's not the performing art that we're talking about today.

I'm astounded at the minister's complete lack of understanding of this valuable industry. Governments throughout North America provide funding of film and television production all over the place. In Canada,

competition comes from British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, Nova Scotia, as well as south of the border.

Since the announcement of the cuts to the OFDC, six productions, with a production value of \$8 million, have left the province or have been halted. Those, Madam Minister, are jobs, jobs that your government is allowing to leave.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Will you put your question.

Mr Bartolucci: This government continues to treat the support of our film industry as corporate welfare. Clearly, support of this industry, which employs 35,000 Ontarians and is a growing export industry, should be treated as economic development.

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mr Bartolucci: My supplementary is twofold: Has the minister bothered to look at the potential of the export market with respect to film and television production, and, Minister, what is your plan to promote the film industry in Ontario?

Hon Ms Mushinski: Perhaps I could respond by saying that Ontario's cultural agencies continue to thrive, attracting approximately four million visitors annually, and that, of course, significantly increases tourism and accommodation revenues.

And let me go on to say that the Ontario Arts Council still has \$38 million to spend. We are still supporting 38 arts service organizations to the tune of \$2.7 million. Over \$2.9 million will be spent on cultural projects grants in this year. TVOntario is still on the air—receives over \$55 million in subsidies from the province—and is broadcasting educational programs to the province. The province will still be spending—

The Speaker: Wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Ms Mushinski: —\$36 million on libraries, and we still provide heritage services and money across Ontario to 200 museums and 60 historical societies and organizations.

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LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, under the current Labour Relations Act it states as one of the purposes, "To provide for effective, fair and expeditious methods of dispute resolution." In your legislation, your anti-worker Bill 7, you remove the word "fair" and you say, "To promote the expeditious resolution of workplace disputes."

Minister, what's wrong with the word "fair"? Why have you removed "fair" as one of the purposes of the Labour Relations Act of this province?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): In response to the member for Hamilton Centre, we are quite prepared to acknowledge the fact that labour relations need to be dealt with in a climate that includes the need for fairness, and that's exactly what we are proposing to do.

Mr Christopherson: Well, let's just pull the thread a little further. The current law says that after certification

of a new bargaining unit and before a first contract is entered into, no employee can be fired without "just cause"—the words are "just cause." Your legislation takes out the protection of "just cause."

And further, under the existing law, arbitrators are explicitly given the power to apply the Ontario Human Rights Code in dealing with grievances and says the Human Rights Code overrides any contrary terms of a collective agreement. You're taking that out.

Minister, is it because you can't defend these kinds of withdrawals of workers' rights, such as fairness and just cause and protecting and enforcing the Human Rights Code, that you're afraid to take this legislation out into the province and let the people of Ontario comment on it?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We are quite prepared to take the legislation out and we are going to have hearings on the legislation. There will be ample opportunity for individuals to make representation.

I would just like to indicate to you we are going beyond—beyond—fairness in that we are putting into legislation democracy measures which for the first time will guarantee that every worker in a workplace will know that certification is going on, which has never happened before, and they will have the opportunity to make the choice. We are being very fair.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce): My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Minister, we like to think of our education system as offering a safe place for learning. However, many young female students have stated that they encounter sexual harassment in their own schools. What steps will the minister be taking to end this form of abuse in the education system?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): The honourable member has raised an issue that is indeed a serious problem in the classrooms, in the hallways, in the school buildings around the province of Ontario. In fact, a recent survey done with grade 9 students indicated that over 80% of female students have experienced some form of sexual harassment at school. That's indeed a very serious problem for the province.

Yesterday, I joined my colleague the minister responsible for women's issues, representatives from the Ontario women's directorate and representatives from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation at the Mayfield high school to launch this, which is a kit called The Joke's Over. It's designed to combat student-to-student sexual harassment in the schools of Ontario. It's not the total answer to ending this plague, but it is a first step, and an important first step.

Mrs Fisher: Minister, what is your response to those who say that this sort of activity is just a normal part of teenage behaviour?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Sexual harassment includes such things as degrading remarks, people being "rated" and other contact between students, often in the hallways of schools across the province of Ontario. These are not only serious, but they're also violations of the law, violations of the Ontario Human Rights Code and viol-

ations of the Ministry of Education and Training's violence-free school policy.

Sexual harassment is a form of violence that dramatically affects the school results of people who have been victims. It dramatically affects the lives of people who have been victims.

Interjections.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): So why don't you make a minister's statement?

Hon Mr Snobelen: The members opposite might find this to be a much more serious problem if they had joined myself and my colleague yesterday at that high school and listened to the testimony of young girls there in that high school assembly who have experienced sexual assault in their schools. I think the members opposite would find this to be a much more serious problem.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In July, the Minister of Housing reneged on a contractual agreement made by the government. What they have done is cancelled over 390 construction projects that would have stimulated construction in the building industry. In that aftermath from these housing cuts, many businesses in the private sector engaged in these projects have been forced to fire staff and declare bankruptcy. Is the minister prepared to honour those contractual agreements that were signed?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Yes, this government did cancel the boondoggle of non-profit housing, the one that was costing us hundreds of millions of dollars a year, and I'm very happy we did.

As far as the cancelled contracts are concerned, this ministry has told every sponsor group that it will live up to its obligations and ensure that any funds that were invested by those groups will be reimbursed, provided that they followed the guidelines of the ministry at the time, and we are going to do that.

Mr Curling: This government has cancelled those contractual agreements and thrown many, many businesses out of business and have put them into bankruptcy, and then you're saying you will honour—what you have done is force the non-profit groups that they must sign off before you can pass money to them, and in the meantime held the other contractors to ransom. That's what you have done. Then you are saying you will honour it. You will not honour it.

Will you now, today, prepare to sit down with those contractors who in good faith signed those contracts with non-profit groups, and come to a reasonable agreement so they can get on with their lives and make sure they'll not be bankrupt and put their families and other people in that jeopardy?

Hon Mr Leach: Our arrangement with the non-housing profit groups is with the sponsor groups and we have committed to honour those groups and meet—

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): "Non-housing"—that's right.

Hon Mr Leach: Yes, "non-profit" is the biggest misnomer the world has ever heard. Tell me one person in non-profit who doesn't make a great deal of profit out of building houses. Millions of dollars have been squandered.

I'm also pleased to be able to tell the honourable member that a number of the non-profit organizations and sponsor groups have found ways of going on with their projects and putting them up without tens of thousands of dollars of annual subsidies from the government. We will deal with each one of the sponsor groups whose responsibility it is to deal with the contractors in question. We are living up to our obligations. We're dealing with the non-profit housing groups and we'll continue to do so. 1500

NATIVE LAND CLAIMS

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the minister responsible for native affairs. Last week, a first nation in northwestern Ontario had to resort to blockading a provincial highway to get the minister's attention.

Despite the fact that land claim negotiations were going on with the Big Grassy First Nation throughout 1993, 1994 and early 1995, the community has been waiting five months to talk with the minister responsible for native affairs and his officials, and they've heard nothing other than some agents for the government showing up at the community and announcing that the government is going to take unilateral action.

I want to ask the minister responsible for native affairs, is he or are his officials going to talk with the Big Grassy First Nation and resume settlement discussions with them regarding the bridge over the Big Grassy River?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The situation at Big Grassy is a serious situation which we are well aware of, and discussions, as I understand, have continued over a long period of time and are continuing. The problem we have with Big Grassy is that there is a highway bridge connecting the town of Morson, and the highway bridge has now been reduced by way of load capacity. The Ministry of Transportation wishes to repair that bridge so it can maintain a full capacity and so the town of Morson will not be cut off from the rest of the world.

At the same time, we have indicated to the first nation that we wish to continue discussions pertaining to the ownership of land, and in particular the river bed. Those discussions are taking place. We are attempting to resolve that problem. We appreciate any help the member himself can lend to the situation. But of prime importance is the safety of that bridge and the fact that the bridge should be repaired so that the town of Morson is not isolated. At the same time, we've made a commitment that we will continue to negotiate the land claim with the first nation.

Mr Hampton: I'm glad to hear that after five and a half months and after the first nation having to blockade the bridge, the minister has decided that discussions regarding settlement will begin again.

I want to ask the minister, by way of supplementary, another question. Most of northern Ontario's economy

depends upon cooperation between native and non-native communities. Most of the paper mills, the pulp mills, the sawmills, the mines have to rely to some extent upon cooperative relationships with first nations to get resources to the mills, to get resources to the mines so people can work.

Your government is starting to create a pattern of confrontation rather than a pattern of cooperation and communication with first nations. In doing so, the risks to the northern Ontario economy are quite significant. What are you going to do to create better communication and better cooperation with first nations communities? Do they all have to stage blockades before they get your attention?

Hon Mr Harnick: I hope the member is not suggesting that we settle negotiations for land claims by blockading and by forcing negotiations to take place over blockades. That is not the way this government wishes to deal with land claims. We wish to deal with land claims on the basis of their merits, and that's the way we will continue to deal with them.

The member also indicates that there was a blockade and heightens this situation beyond the level to which it should be heightened. The native population did not blockade the bridge. They had a passive action there where they were informing motorists who were passing over the bridge what the state of negotiations was.

Quite frankly, negotiations have not been discontinued; they have been continuing. We are trying to deal—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Could you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Mr Harnick: —with the ownership of the land and of the river bed, but it is not right to suggest or to ask natives to create blockades and cut towns off. We have to strike a balance here.

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

Hon Mr Harnick: We have to strike a balance here, and we have to make sure that the town of Morson remains viable and that all other towns and mills remain viable and that we continue to deal with native land claims on the basis of their merits. And let me tell you that many, many of these claims—

The Speaker: Time.

New question; the member for Sarnia.

Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia): My question is to the Attorney General. About 5,000 Sarnians woke up over the weekend to a lawsuit launched by the Chippewa band in Sarnia. It claims about 10% of urban Sarnia. The native lawsuit is set to cover about 2,101 homes, nine farms, 17 commercial properties, 80 industrial properties, five schools, five churches and two institutions. People in my riding are very confused and afraid of how this will affect them. We should vigorously defend this present ownership of the land, as far as I'm concerned. Do you agree?

Hon Mr Harnick: We have received a statement of claim, as the member for Sarnia has indicated. The Ministry of the Attorney General will be defending that claim as we would in the normal course, and we will defend that claim vigorously.

In so far as private property is concerned, it should be noted that any negotiations that have ever taken place in the course of a lawsuit or a land claim have not involved the exchange of private property. Those people in Sarnia can rest assured that there will be a vigorous defence of this claim and that if there are any discussions at any point, they will not involve the exchange of private property.

Now that the issue is before the courts, I cannot, of course, divulge or speak about anything to do with the actual lawsuit, but that has been and will continue to be the policy of the government of Ontario.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I would seek unanimous consent of the House to sit till 9 pm this evening in order to have more opportunity for people to speak on Bill 7, which will be called later today. I would ask for that unanimous consent.

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent? No. ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I have a petition signed by people who are concerned about the ethanol project in my riding. They write,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to honour a \$3-million commitment to assist the Seaway Valley Farmers' Energy Co-operative to construct a \$40-million to \$45-million facility to produce ethanol fuel and associated byproducts in the Cornwall area.

"This \$3-million commitment was announced by the former government on April 5, 1995, and supported by MPPs from all three parties, including the current Agriculture minister, whom we hereby petition to" release the money to the Seaway Valley cooperative.

I have also signed this petition.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1509 to 1539.

The Speaker: Would the members take their seats, please.

The member for Fort York has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will please rise.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 23, the nays 58.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

PETITIONS

CLEAR-CUTTING

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): It is my pleasure, on behalf of the member for Brampton North

and myself, to indicate that we recently attended the Earnscliffe Senior Public School in my riding, where we were presented with a signed petition from over 800 students. The petition reads, in part:

"We, the undersigned, demand that the Ontario government pass laws to ban the logging practice of clear-cutting in Ontario forests. Clear-cutting devastates forests, leaving scars visible to astronauts orbiting in space. Clear-cutting is more destructive than natural disasters like fire and disease."

I would be happy to present this petition to the House, and in conclusion, I would move that this House do now proceed to the orders of the day.

Interjections.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): No, afraid not—you can't make a speech and then a motion.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Further petitions? The member for Windsor-Riverside.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe that a member standing in his place and legally having the floor can put a dilatory motion at any point during his particular speech.

Mr Cooke: Mr Speaker, I think it's quite clear. I was recognized. The motion was in order. The rules say very clearly that it's not debatable. The motion has to be put.

The Speaker: My understanding is that the petition was not in order; therefore, it was not his right to have the floor at that time. The petition wasn't in order, and I will have to accept the motion moved by the member for Windsor-Riverside.

Interjection: He wasn't in order either.

The Speaker: My understanding is that there is nothing out of order. We've already had the motion to adjourn the House once; that has been voted on. My understanding now is that there's nothing out of order, so we can proceed with the next item of business.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand a public inquiry into the conduct of all crown and law enforcement officials/employees at all levels involved in the investigation of Karla Homolka and, in particular, the circumstances of the negotiation of the plea bargain arrangement. We also demand that all day passes and other privileges be revoked and her full 12-year sentence be served in its entirety."

I support this petition and will be adding my signature to it.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1545 to 1616.

The Speaker: Would the members take their seats, please.

The member for Rainy River moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will please rise.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 20; the nays 54.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): Mr Speaker, I do now move that the House move to orders of the day.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Those in favour say "aye."

Those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1617 to 1646.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the member for Dufferin-Peel's motion carry?

Those in favour will please rise. Take your seats, please.

Those opposed will please rise. Take your seats, please.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 51; the nays are 20.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LABOUR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1995

LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL ET L'EMPLOI

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations / Projet de loi 7, Loi visant à rétablir l'équilibre et la stabilité dans les relations de travail et à promouvoir la prospérité économique et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois en ce qui concerne les relations de travail.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Once again, as I have on many occasions, I call on the government, on behalf of our party, to hold province-wide public hearings. Day after day we have seen good reason why we ought to have such hearings.

First of all, that was the procedure that was followed by the previous government under Bill 40. We know there are questions about this bill that the minister cannot or will not answer adequately. We're hearing from not just the labour movement but also the business community, and now also some editorials are calling for the government to move cautiously, to be careful of what they're doing, and the best way to do that is to hold province-wide public hearings.

We also know from experience that certain laws are enacted by some ministers and have to be changed afterwards because they either didn't read it or didn't think it through or don't understand it, but there has to be a correction.

Given the fact that this 132-page bill, one of the largest bills we've seen, changes dramatically and fundamentally the rules for conducting labour relations in the province of Ontario, there is every good reason why there ought to be province-wide public hearings on this. We will continue to push and pressure this government, using every means available to us so that the people of Ontario can have the say that they rightfully deserve before you go dismantling rights that workers have had in this province for decades.

I want to pick up where I left off yesterday in moving to another area of concern, and this time I would like to talk about the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, commonly know as CECBA. What's interesting about this is that it's very much linked to the tax cut, the tax promise that this government has made. It's tied to the bottom-line-driven agenda of this government, where people don't matter and don't count. It very much points to the financial bind that this government is in, because we know that in order to give the rich the kind of tax break that they're talking, 30%—and we know that for working people of this province, when Tories change tax laws, it benefits the most wealthy.

It doesn't take an accountant to understand that. Ask any working person in this province, when Tories change the tax laws, who does better, the very wealthy or the working people, and you'll get the experience that Ontarians have faced under both federal and provincial Tory governments. So that's part of what's driving this in a big way. That's why these cuts are so deep and so harsh and so difficult for ministers to defend daily in question period, as we see.

The only way that this government can afford the kind of tax cuts to its wealthy friends is to sell off major portions of the public service here in Ontario. Now, I will say quite forthrightly to the members in the government that there have to be changes in the way that government performs its functions on behalf of the people. We started a number of those measures. In fact, we made changes—

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): Like what? Mr Christopherson: I hear the member off in the corner talking about "Like what?" Well, for instance, we were the first government that actually lowered the expenditures on program spending year over year. No Liberal government did that.

Laughter.

Mr Christopherson: You laugh, but if you understood what had gone on here the last five years, you would know that's the truth. The truth, of course, is the one thing you don't want to hear and that's why you won't have province-wide public hearings.

The fact of the matter is no Tory government in the history of this province was able to achieve what we did in terms of expenditure control. But we didn't do it in a way that puts the boot to working people, that goes after the poor, that victimizes even further innocent Ontarians. That's the reality and that's the kind of truth we want to get out in the public domain through province-wide public hearings, and that's why you're afraid to do it, because you can't face these kinds of realities.

I further say that in making the changes we did, we accepted the fact that things have to be done differently. Indeed, there may be parts of the public sector that need to be looked at in terms of who performs it and how it's performed. There is a whole host of things that no other government faced—they really didn't have to or wouldn't—but we did, and we faced it during the toughest recession this province has seen since the Depression. In fact, never before in the history of Ontario had revenue into the coffers of the Ontario government declined in real dollars two years in a row; never happened in the history of the province. We dealt with that and we dealt with it head-on.

What we didn't do, however, was go after the most vulnerable in our society and say, "We're going to put all of this on your backs and you're going to pay the price of all those years of mismanagement." We tried to find ways that would allow us to work with people, work with communities. I've talked about what your government has done in my own community in terms of capital projects that were devastated.

We understand what it is to govern. We understand the predicament you're in. You're not admitting to all of it, because if you did, you'd be telling the people of Ontario that the reason you're being so harsh is that your 30% tax cut is awfully hard to do when we're in the midst of the kind of financial difficulty that we're in. You're trying to make the case that there's a crisis, and if there was such a crisis, it doesn't even make common sense, let alone economic sense, that you'd give back revenue at a time when you've got a major fiscal crunch. It makes no sense. It's pure politics. But there it is, and you're married to your little book and you'll follow that and march right off into the darkness with it.

But what it means to the people who work for this province, who provide services, is that for you to reach those kinds of dollars, over \$4 billion, to pay for that tax cut, you've got to sell off huge parts of the public service. We know, when we look at Mulroney's Tories, it was sold to their friends, and we know that you'll sell the most profitable parts, the most efficient parts, and you'll hold on to the parts that are more costly or that maybe don't return as big a profit because of the nature of the service.

For instance, you can't run a police service or a fire service based on a business balance sheet only. So you'll look at the parts that you can afford to sell off to your friends, but, oh, when the Tories look at this, they say to themselves, "We want to be able to maximize the profits." And where are those profits to be found? In public service, the biggest expenditure is wages and benefits, because in many cases it's a human service, a

people service, that's being provided. It can't be done by a machine.

But you have a little problem, and the problem is that in the history of this province there's been an acknowledged right of workers who have their business sold to continue to benefit from the collective agreements they've negotiated. The interesting thing is that part of that is still preserved for some people. It's not as if you seem to have a problem with the philosophy, because you leave it intact for the largest portion of the private sector. No, you've gone directly in your anti-worker Bill 7 and said, if it's under CECBA, if it's under the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, the public sector workers, and if it's sold off, the law now says, under your new legislation: "You've got no rights. All the benefits that you've negotiated, all the protection that you've negotiated in fair collective bargaining over the years with your employer, and wages that are meant to reflect what you're entitled to for the work you perform, all have

So what have we got? We've got a government that has to find billions of dollars to pay for a tax giveaway to their wealthy friends. The way to pay for it is to sell off part of the heritage of this province, which is the services we provide. You'll sell it to your pals. Mulroney did it; you will too. And you'll allow them to maximize their profit, not through efficiencies or introduction of technologies or other quite acceptable means, but by gutting the rights that the workers who perform that service have and just taking away that collective agreement. There isn't any collective agreement.

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That's what's so insidious about this, that when you get up—and I hear members of the government talk about workplace democracy and health and safety and, "We care." There's not one bit of evidence that proves the point, not one. But when you stand back and look at all of this, and it does take a while to take in 132 pages—and by the way, this doesn't just amend the Ontario Labour Relations Act. Let's not forget, you threw away the old one. This is a whole new bill; everything changes. It's never been done like that ever in the history of the province of Ontario, and you're doing it. And when one has an opportunity to stand back and look at why—

Interjections.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Mr Speaker, the zealots are breaking the flow of my colleague as he speaks.

Mr Christopherson: Thank you to my colleague from Nipigon, but it does prove the point that you either don't know—and it's all back—well, I see one minister here, two ministers, a half a minister. You either don't know what's going on or you don't care. Because you're hurting people and you're hurting them needlessly, and you're doing it to benefit your friends, your wealthy friends, and you're doing it at the expense of workers and the disabled and the poor and women and children and road safety, and you have the audacity to sit there and applaud when someone stands up and says, "Speaker, the emperor has no clothes."

It will come back to haunt you. It will come back to haunt you, because day after day Ontarians are watching in question period, which right or wrong is the focus of what happens in Parliament. People are seeing and listening to ministers who, yes, are getting through question period, by and large, but who are not answering legitimate questions being put to them.

And it's going to take a while. It's going to take a little while. But I can remember there was a big change in the 1960s, when there was something on TV day after day after day after day and over a period of time it changed the whole country as people began to ask themselves: "Does this need to be? Do people need to be hurt like this? Why are we doing this?"

That's what's going to happen to you, because we are going to continue to point out the damage and the harm and the hurt that you're doing to people under the auspices of worrying about the finances but it's really to take care of your political IOU, a 30% tax cut, and in the process make sure your wealthy pals get even more wealthy by virtue of selling off public sector services, eliminating contracts, and letting people make money on that. The needs of the people of Ontario are either second or third or they're not even on your list.

Again you hear the groans from the backbenchers. By now I gather you're understanding that you're not up to speed on the full agenda, so there's a certain amount of forgiveness for some of you here. But I'll tell you, the people who are driving this agenda, the Mike Harrises and the Longs and the others, know exactly what this is meant to do, and we're going to continue to stand up at every opportunity and point it out.

I say again, that's why, it's the only reason why this government's afraid to take Bill 7 across the province and into communities and let people comment on both what has and hasn't happened and what will or won't happen as a result of this change, because they can't handle the truth and it'll happen in community after community after community, and you know it and we know it, and that's why you're not doing it.

I say to you, Speaker, in closing my remarks on CECBA, that probably the greatest offence that we take on this side of the House is to suggest that if you work for the public sector, you must be overpaid and underworked. That's a subtext of everything this now government did in opposition and it's the subtext of everything they're doing as they enact their new laws.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): And they've tabled closure—without even telling us.

Mr Christopherson: Have they now tabled closure? Mr Cooke: They have now tabled closure.

Mr Christopherson: Now I'm informed by my House leader that we've tabled closure. So we're not going to get province-wide public hearings, but now I'm advised

that we're going to move closure on this.

Is there anything left at all that you can say that would possibly justify or cover the fact that you're just afraid to let people talk about what the reality is, because you can't defend it. You can't defend it, and that's why you're doing this.

It's unacceptable to us and will be every step of the way to allow the working people who provide services—I'm probably looking at some who may be privatized, and there goes their collective agreement. There are others right in this building, people we see who work for us every day as members, and who you know very well are hardworking and dedicated and committed. If they end up out there on that limb as you cut off the branch, too bad. That's the approach. The government says to those people: "Too bad. We have to pay for that tax cut for our wealthy friends."

I want to now move to the issue of replacement workers.

Mr Pouliot: Scabs.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Scabs.

Mr Christopherson: Some of my colleagues are calling out "scabs," and there's reason for that. It's a vile term. It's probably one of the greatest insults, worst insults, that you could ever hurl at another person. But it exists for a very good reason.

There's such a fundamental misunderstanding by this government of what working people are all about and about what strike action means and what labour unions are all about. Of course, as far as this government's concerned, unions are bad, unions are evil. They have absolutely no positive contribution to make, and the more this government can do to put the boot to them, the better they feel about it and the more they think they're contributing to a better Ontario.

The fact of the matter is that unions came about for a very good reason. We know what happened in decades past and the kind of exploitation that existed. We know that without proper legislation and protection, there are some employers—not all, by any means, but there are some—who will take advantage and they will take advantage to an extent where this province finally had to introduce health and safety legislation and the right to bargain collectively and to provide a legal framework that allowed those rights to be defended and protected, and there was an evolution to that.

I want to also dispel the idea that there are union bosses who call strikes. That's not the way it happens. I don't know how many of you have worked on a shop floor—

Laughter.

Mr Christopherson: Look at them laugh. They have no idea. I don't know how many of them have actually punched a clock or worked in a shop for any length of real time—not summer jobs; I mean where you've been there and that's your life, that's your bread and butter. If you did, you would understand that it is quite frightening for workers to cast a ballot to go on strike, because what it means to that worker is that they're putting their ability to put food on the table and pay the rent and provide for their children's needs on the line. They're putting that on the line, because once they're out on strike, there's no way of predicting how long.

Labour leaders who are elected from among the workers—they didn't come from some other planet, they come from the workforce themselves as they elect their

own, as we've elected the Speaker. They elect their own leaders, and when those leaders recommend that they need a strike vote, they do it because they know they need that leverage in the bargaining process. So workers are very careful and very cautious and very thoughtful and very clear when they mark on a ballot to give their bargaining committee the authority to call a strike if necessary.

Usually, particularly in the last few years, there is no need for a strike. In the last few years, upwards of 95%, 97%, of all collective agreements were signed and resolved without the need of lockout or strike. That's the success, that's good leadership, that's what good union leaders are doing and I might add that's also what good human resource leaders, for their management, are doing when they sit down and work together, because that's the strength of Ontario.

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But from time to time for varying reasons there are strikes or lockouts. When those workers walk out the door the day the strike is to take effect they're terrified of what the future may hold because they don't know when they're going to get another paycheque. But they know that this is what they have to do in order to achieve ultimately a fair collective agreement. So now we're in a situation where the workers I've described are outside on a picket line and they're using the pressure of withdrawing their services as a leverage against the company holding back a paycheque to try to get through the logjam to get to win-win, to get to success, and success is a collective agreement that everybody can live with.

Sometimes those things go on. Oftentimes they're a couple of days, a few weeks; sometimes they go on. If they go on long enough real workers, honest people, find themselves in very difficult situations. Because they don't have that paycheque, bills pile up. Kids still need shoes. They still have the same obligations they had before, but they're sticking together as a group and they're doing the best they can to find a solution.

In the past, before the current labour legislation existed, there would be times when the employer would decide to bring somebody across that picket line and take that worker's job. So now there's an imbalance. Now the workers are withholding their work and not getting the paycheques, but the work is now being done by someone else, and if that continues the workers can't win. How could the workers win if there's a strike outside a picket line and people are crossing the picket line and going in and doing the job? How do they win that strike?

The resentment and the bitterness that workers feel when someone takes away their job and their future and their ability to provide for their family, I dare say anybody in this place in that kind of circumstance would have those same feelings. I don't think you could be human and not feel that way if that was happening to you and you watched somebody come in every day and take your job, and in doing so eliminate your ability to get your job back. Why would the company negotiate? They don't need to. You're a nuisance, maybe it's not good press, but as long as they can function and carry on they don't need you.

We said in this province, as we have in other provinces: "That is illegal. That is illegal, to allow that work to be scabbed." That's why that term came to be, because the feelings that went on in those workers who were having everything in their life taken away from them had to be focused and it had to have meaning, and that's where it came from. What happened when we brought it out—oh, I can remember back to the debates when the Tories were over on this side of the House there was going to be calamity and business was going to leave and it was going to be awful. There was going to be just such devastation wreaked across the land—didn't happen. Didn't happen. In fact, what it gave us was an era of unprecedented labour peace, because that's where most violence comes from: that process of bringing someone in to take their job.

What else happened? We saw record levels of dollars invested—over \$8 billion in 1994—in a highly unionized manufacturing sector, a net gain of over 170,000 jobs, real jobs, and that was the benefit.

But this government hopped on its ideological horse and said: "You can't shackle business that way. You can't do this. Business won't be able to survive." You went on and on and on. It's been disproved—didn't happen—and I point out again that that's why you don't want province-wide public hearings, because you know the truth will come out, and we're seeing it daily in terms of information we're getting.

We believe fundamentally, and you may disagree fundamentally—obviously you do—that it's fair labour relations policy and labour law to say that to maintain the balance in the negotiating process of collective agreements between employers and employees this province will not tolerate scabs, period. Now you've said it's okay. Each of you has said and given your blessing to the fact that you support strikebreakers, that that's okay with you; that's okay.

What's going to happen? Well, what do you expect labour leaders like Gord Wilson, who's the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, to do? What do you expect him to do when faced with the boot of this government? Major corporations are responding to this in joint letters with Buzz Hargrove, who's the president of the Canadian Auto Workers, and saying to this government: "Hold off. You're going to disrupt all that labour harmony we have, and it's going to hurt business."

But this government doesn't want common sense to get in the way of its revolution, and its revolution says, "Scabs are okay and strikebreaking is okay and everybody's just going to have to eat the consequences because that's what we believe in."

We do not accept, will never accept, that strikebreaking would be allowed in this province. It's wrong. Most of them should know it's wrong, and they ought not to be surprised by the reaction they're getting from labour. They ought not to be surprised at all. And you're causing it, because it didn't exist before. You're causing it.

Workplace democracy: If ever there were an Orwellian name for actions, it has to be "workplace democracy" coming from Tories. It just boggles the mind that they would have the absolute audacity to call what they're doing "workplace democracy."

First of all, the best example of workplace democracy this province has seen in a long time was the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, which was the agency set up to design and provide workplace health and safety for workers. The model was that half the board of directors will be employers and half will be employees, represented by their chosen individuals on both sides.

That made a lot of sense. In fact, there are reams of letters from people who have gone through the programs, some of them managers, talking about the improvement in their own workplace, the benefit to their employees, the decrease in the number of injuries. And God forbid you get hurt in this province in the future, with this government attacking WCB as well as everything else.

They worked together and they worked cooperatively, and it brought out the best in what Ontario can be in terms of productivity and quality of life and standard of living. We moved away from confrontation as much as possible and said: "Look, it is a global economy. Competitiveness matters to us, so we have a vested interest, both of us, employer and employees, in making sure that Ontario is strong."

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It sounds like good workplace democracy to me, and it would seem to me that that's a model one would want to use as a pattern for other applications when dealing with labour relations. Is that what this government did? No. They killed it. They killed it because it gave employees too much power, in their mind. Half was too much, even though it's the workers who get hurt on the job; they're the ones affected by the need for health and safety legislation and training. They killed it. One of the first things they did: killed it. They're going to put it in the WCB. Hell, it was taken out of the WCB because there wasn't enough attention being paid to preventing accidents, and that's why the agency was set up.

So that's exactly what they're doing: killing it, moving it back. That's their goal, because they can't handle the idea of real workplace democracy. They can't handle the idea, because what it really means is that workers would have a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives. Not run the corporation on a day-to-day basis, not make the individual business decisions, but where there are significant decisions being made that affect their lives, like health and safety and like closures and transfer of business, they should have a say. This government doesn't believe that.

Personally, I find one of the most insulting things in this whole document to be an attempt by this government, by this Tory Harris government, to hijack the term "workplace democracy" and attach that label to the gutting and devastation of workers' rights that really is what Bill 7 is all about. I find that absolutely disgusting, and I'm going to do everything I can at every turn to point out the absolute hypocrisy and shamefulness of trying to use the term "workplace democracy" as a cover for the attack on workers, and that's what this bill is really all about.

Under this same rubric, we have changes to the certification. Let's understand, stand back for a minute and remember: This government hates unions. They hate unions. They want to do everything they can to weaken unions. If they could eliminate them with the stroke of a pen, they would. But they're attempting to do it bit by bit.

The certification process that existed in this province for almost 50 years provided for an automatic certification. If a certain level of membership cards were signed by the workforce, there was an automatic certification because it was accepted that the will of the majority of the workers had spoken. That concept was supported by Tory governments for decades, by the Liberal government when it was in power, and of course by our government when we were in power. So it's not an ideological thing between Tories, Liberals and New Democrats. This is a concept that's been there for decades. Bill Davis was quite satisfied that this process existed in this province.

The reason for it is very simple: It's not an equal fight in the workplace, if you're going to call a union drive or a membership drive a fight; it's not equal because there are people who are in that place who are subordinate to others, who can also be influenced—in a small number of cases, I grant you, but they can be influenced—with threats of job loss, personal recrimination, plant closures or even subtle things like being moved around on a shift. You get the impression that life's going to be awful difficult for you if you go along with this.

To balance that, Tory governments and Libs and New Democrats have accepted that if you reach a certain threshold of cards being signed, that offsets things and now the people who work there have spoken. That, all of a sudden, after decades, is being wiped out as this government Americanizes the way that labour law is practised in this province. That's what this is all about.

Interjections.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I think you hit it; you hit the nail on the head. They're howling.

Mr Christopherson: Well, sure they're howling. They should be howling.

Let's look at the other side of the coin: decertification. There have always been provisions in the province for decertification, for whatever reason, if a group of employees decided they no longer wished to be represented by either a union or that particular union; they may wish to go to a different one. There were decertification processes in place that allowed that. This government has lowered the threshold on the percentage vote that triggers the decert process. They've lowered that because they want to encourage employers to push for decertifications. It fits; it fits with all of their thinking. They want to inhibit the ability of unions to organize, because they don't like unions and they want them eradicated. They make it easier by changing the rules for decertification.

Mr Hastings: It's a conspiracy.

Mr Christopherson: Well, the member from the corner hollers out "conspiracy." I don't give you that much credit. It's not a conspiracy. It's right up front for

everybody to see. It's all there. It's there in fact and it will be there, unfortunately, in law as we go through step by step of living under this regime.

You've now said that there can be votes. You can attempt to hold them within five days—all of this is under that rubric of fairness—but the board still will have the discretion to push that off if it deems it necessary. With the amount of work these processes add for the board and the fact that you'll probably slash its budget, the odds are that that time will be increased. That whole factor of recognizing the inherent unfairness without some opportunity to be compensated for it will be there in place, courtesy of the Mike Harris Tories.

This bill really is the opening shot in your war against unions. Workers who aren't in unions are just collateral damage, but they're getting hurt just the same.

I want to talk a bit about the construction sector, because here we have an example where again this government has not thought through what it is it is doing. If they took the time to talk to people like Jim Moffatt and others in the building trades and construction industry, they would realize that not only do the unions in this sector reject philosophically what you're doing, for the reasons I've outlined, but the procedures in your proposal can't work. In fact, I'm hearing rumblings that the Minister of Labour may or may not be considering some changes, because even she's recognizing that to pass a law that can't work because it doesn't make sense is unacceptable even for this crew.

I think it makes the point that not only have they made mistakes in passing regulations which almost had the effect of taking tens of thousands of disabled people off their benefits—

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): It was a drafting error.

Mr Christopherson: That's what this government did: They said it was a drafting error. My friend the member for Hamilton East says, "It was a drafting error" was their excuse. That was your excuse.

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Well, we suggest you've got another drafting problem, if indeed that's what it is, and we're ready to help you and so are a lot of other people in the province. Yes, they're going to speak out philosophically and yes, they're going to say they're opposed, and some are going to say they support it, but at the end of the day everybody will have had the benefit of commenting on this bill and pointing out what will work and what won't work and why.

I predict right now that this government will have to bring in amendments, at the very least in the area of the construction trades industry, because they are now aware, or are being made aware, of the fact that some of their rules around their workplace democracy won't work—will not work. The time limits won't work. The construction industry is different. They're on a number of different work sites, and the ability to have ratification votes etc is very much different in the construction industry than it is in the industrial sector or in an office setting—entirely different.

That just shows how little this government really understands workers and the labour movement and even what they're doing, because it's constantly making these kinds of mistakes. Yet today you table a motion that says you're going to bring closure. So you not only will prevent Ontarians from having their say on this, but the final nail will be to shut down all debate in this place. You will not only prevent workers and business and communities from having the input that they're entitled to, but now you're preventing the elected representatives from at least continuing that discussion on their behalf.

The boot from this government just seems to get bigger and uglier, and it all ties back into their 30% tax cut to their friends. Never lose sight of that, that it all fits in there when we talk about why this government is doing what it's doing.

They cut the wage protection program where you're no longer entitled to the severance and termination pay you're entitled to because they have to save money to pay for their tax cut for their friends. You no longer can collect any back wages or vacation pay that you're owed, money you've already worked for, if it's more than \$2,000, when it used to be \$5,000. "Save money." Save money to pay for the tax cut to take care of their friends.

Putting in place a law that takes away the rights of workers in the public sector as you sell off parts of the public service— the profitable parts, of course—to your friends, and we know that's what will happen. I say again we watched it with Mulroney. Everything he sold off was the profitable part and it went to pals of his who made even more money.

But you're making it even easier because you're taking away another right from workers. You're saying if you have a collective agreement and if you have vacation entitlements and seniority rights and health and safety protection—and in many cases those are more important to workers than the actual wages, but the wages are included too—all of that's gone by virtue of your antiworker Bill 7. So the more you sell off, the happier you are and the happier your friends are and the easier it is for you to find the billions you need to pay for your 30% tax cut.

When all of these factors are put in front of the government and we say to them, "We want you to allow security guards across the province who are now going to be denied their right democratically to choose the union they want"—you're taking away that right, the right of cleaning staff, often very low-paid people, as are security guards, mainly women, many of them here from other nations—you're taking away their right, and what's interesting about that one in terms of the cleaning staff, in many cases when there's a new contract that comes in in terms of the business, the very people who were already there stay.

That's the way it used to be. Now if the workers stay there and the contract's gone, at least they maintain their benefits, and these are already people at minimum wage, which today I heard the Premier pontificating on as if he cared and saying that he did. Yet those are the folks he's going after in this bill also. Going after every vulnerable group—

Mr Bisson: How about the business group? Are they going after them?

Mr Christopherson: Every special interest, as they call it. It's interesting, you never hear them talk about the business special interest. Oh, no, business isn't a special interest. No, no, no. Banks wouldn't be special interests. That's different. No, no. People on social assistance, now those are special interests. The labour movement, that's special interests. That happens from time to time, and as soon as they can stick that label on, they go after them.

Oh, great. Here's the motion. So there we are. The time allocation motion says the whole bill will be done by November 2, next Thursday.

Interjection: Thursday?

Mr Christopherson: Next Thursday. All the issues that we've been raising, with no answers, no public input, no opportunity to talk about it, and one more week—

Interjection: Three days of public hearings.

Mr Christopherson: —three days of public hearings in Toronto, though. Don't go out there. Three days, which means like a few hours.

I heard my friend from the Liberal Party the other day talking about the fact that you really believe that if you jam this through by what is now November 2, people will forget and get it off the agenda.

I can just imagine your caucus meetings, where you're being told: "Look, just stick it out, folks. I know it's tough, I know it's rough, but hang in there. We'll get through this, and in a couple of years people will have forgotten." That's what you're being told at your caucus meetings.

What you ought to be listening to are the labour leaders and the business leaders and the communities and the workers themselves, who are saying to you you're going to do incredible—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member for Windsor-Walkerville will come to order.

Mr Christopherson: —damage to the rights that workers have in this province. You're going to do so much damage they will not forget, and every step you're taking to shut this down, with time allocation and a refusal to go out there into the public, just adds one more level of resentment that an awful lot of people are feeling.

Don't think for a minute that if there are problems in the workplace as a result of this—and I'm not encouraging or saying it's going to happen, but I am saying to you, if that happens—your business friends are not going to be any happier with what you've done than the labour movement, because by and large in the last couple of years in this province it's been accepted that working together is how we build a stronger Ontario. Work together, build on each other's strengths, make sure there's fairness, a word that you've now removed from the law, because fairness is something your law doesn't provide.

So, as you do this, jobs that you say are going to be created will not be. There's no magic solution here. In

fact, if anything—not long ago I was invited, as I'm sure others were, to speak to some representatives at the US consulate. They just wanted some thoughts on what would happen in terms of the labour climate.

1740

I thought it was very astute of them. Boy, they sure knew their stuff. I was very impressed. They knew exactly what was going down. They knew the bill, they knew about it. They were right on top of things. But their questioning in their discussions with me was focused on what is going to happen to the labour harmony that has existed. Because it does matter. It does matter. Again, it's part of our strength. Applied technology is a strength, but allowing workers to work with the employers as it's being introduced, particularly if it affects jobs, gives you the opportunity to build on something that other places in the world can't do.

The Workplace Health and Safety Agency saved money because there were fewer injuries and fewer WCB costs. That's how we lower WCB costs, not by marching into government and slashing benefits to the disabled. That's not how you build our future.

The infrastructure announcements that some of you now are going to so gleefully and all the ribbons that you're cutting, those are all things that we did. You know that. You're not doing anything that's investing in this province.

There won't be any celebrations or ribbon-cutting in the future for anything that you've done, because all you've done is hurt communities. You've killed capital works projects that were going to provide jobs, provide strength for our communities, provide infrastructure for our communities so that we can build, so that corporations can prosper and profit and workers and communities can also enjoy those profits because they were a part of it.

That's a vision of Ontario that can be, it's a vision of Ontario that ought to be and it's a vision that you cannot possibly see and certainly can never achieve with what you're doing.

You're making this a meaner place, a harsher place. You're going to lower the quality of life—not just the standard of living but the quality of life—and you're going to do it because you're so ideologically driven, because it says so in your book. That's it. The whole world exists in your book, your Common Sense Revolution. You're also doing it to pay for your 30% tax cut that I know some members of your own party didn't think was a very good idea for economic reasons, but you needed the politics to fit your little simple message in the campaign.

And it worked. You got elected and now, no matter who gets hurt or how much our futures are damaged, no matter how much it costs, you're going to go ahead with this 30% tax cut. You're going to go ahead and eliminate decades of positive labour legislation by going after the labour movement, by going after workers, by slashing benefits, by killing investment projects, by allowing workers to have their rights taken away and have huge chunks of the public sector sold off—whether they should

or shouldn't, you're just going to do it—and deny the people who are performing those services the right to a fair wage and fair benefits.

All that is in here. All of that is in here and you hope people will forget. Let me tell you, they won't forget. Every one of you backbenchers who thinks that all the noise around your constituency offices and the protests and the letters and all that will eventually go away—

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Haven't had one. I'm not getting any problems.

Mr Christopherson: If you're not getting it, you soon will, because this cannot—

Mr Baird: Haven't heard a thing.

Mr Christopherson: You see, that's what you believe. I hear one of the Tory members saying, "Haven't heard a thing." That's what going to change, because you can't continue to dismantle everything that's positive about this province and everything that gives people hope and not expect at some point that the people of Ontario are going to say: "Stop. This is crazy. Why are you doing this?" The answer will be there for them because we're going to tell them: "This is being done to pay for their tax cut. It doesn't have to be this harsh, but they've got to pay off their friends."

In closing my comments on second reading, which is standing on third reading, since a week Thursday this whole matter is finished as far as this House is concerned, which is an absolute disgrace—a disgrace that you would eliminate decades of gains for workers and rights for workers and labour laws that allow corporations to come here and prosper and make money, and you don't want to allow anyone to talk about it because you know it won't hold up. It's an absolute disgrace and you will not be able to shake that disgrace. It will stay with you and haunt you all the way through your term in office. We're going to be there hounding you every step of the way, because you're not going to get away with doing this to the working people of this province without one hell of a fight.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments or questions?

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I rise in the House again to discuss the importance of Bill 7 and how important it is to exempt all kinds of agriculture from the Ontario Labour Relations Act.

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, a point of order.

Mr Barrett: I was in the visitors' gallery a year and a half ago when Mike Harris—

The Deputy Speaker: Could I ask the member for Norfolk, are you commenting?

Mr Barrett: Commenting, sir. Again, with respect to Bill 91—

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr Barrett: —I was in the visitors' gallery about a year and half ago—

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Your job is to recognize the members in this chamber, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Will the member for Norfolk please take his seat.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We know that the rules in the House are very explicit when it comes to responding to a member's speech that has been given in debate at second reading. The member opposite has to confine his comments to what the member spoke about. He's reading from a speech. This is not a time for a statement. In regard to making a speech, he must confine his comments to what the member for Hamilton said in his speech.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): He is out of order.

Mr Bisson: He is out of order, Mr Speaker. He can't read a speech on statements.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to hear what the member for Norfolk is saying to see if his comments are appropriate to the speech that was just made.

Mr Barrett: Again, Mr Speaker, with respect to Bill 91—and I'm surprised it has not been mentioned recently—I referred to a year and a half ago when I was sitting in the visitors' gallery. At that time Mike Harris asked the then Minister of Labour to name one farmer who was in favour of Bill 91. At that time the minister was unable to name anyone other than his own brother.

In our riding we produce steel and auto parts, but agriculture remains—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Norfolk, I'll ask you to keep your comments to respond to the speech that was just given.

Mr Barrett: Bill 7, again, will improve this situation, in contrast to what was considered an anti-farm, ideologically driven piece of legislation previously.

In my riding our tobacco, asparagus, other fruit and vegetable growers, are highly dependent on labour, both domestic labour and offshore labour. It has always been a concern in my riding that merely by the stroke of a pen, organizing rights could be made available for offshore and seasonal labour. Union members could be signed up merely for the course of the summer, providing additional members for union bosses.

Again, this is my concern and it was initiated by the lack of discussion of agriculture on the other side.

1750

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): In his remarks, the member for Hamilton Centre spoke of his distaste at this government's decision to not allow working people and others to speak about this most draconian cut, draconian change in labour laws that this province has ever seen.

You all ought to be ashamed of yourselves. The member for Hamilton Centre spoke. He spoke eloquently and passionately about the need for democracy, about the need to have a chance to respond, and I share his views, because no matter what your opinion of the bill is, you can shut debate down for a few days, but you'll be paying for it for much longer.

We in our party believe in a need for debate. We believe in the need to discuss a bill. We believe in the need to discuss a bill that's as broad and as vast as this. You have an omnibus bill here—three bills—that affect

everything from the Labour Relations Act to CECBA, and yet you say, "No public hearings; no effective consultation."

All of you ought to be ashamed. All of you ought to think it through again clearly.

You talk about union democracy in your bill, and what do you do? You come into this House and you shut down debate. You won't allow the people of this province to respond to your bill. You won't allow working people a chance to stand up and speak, and speak with passion about the gains that have been made since just 50 years ago in my community—my community, the Ford strike, where the Rand formula came into being, and you won't allow the working people of this province.

I've had management groups come to me and tell me about the need for some changes that don't affect the substance of the bill that you're not going to allow to happen now.

Shame on all of you. You'll regret it. We'll be back at this act very soon. You all ought to be ashamed. Allow public hearings, allow them to happen, let people have a say in this bill. Don't be so draconian.

Mr Pouliot: I too listened intently, at times hanging on every word of the sincere, passionate and eloquent presentation on behalf of a philosophy. I too came away impressed with the need to reach an equilibrium, the need to achieve reciprocity, that draconian—and a reminder, not by way of threats nor ultimatum, but surely, and we know that Ontario since Confederation has benefited more than any other jurisdiction, and it has done this because it was in its quest and constant search for middle ground: the right to work in this case, the right to withdraw your labour, the right to refuse to work under hazardous conditions, and, yes, year after year, our rightful place at the workplace.

What is being asked here is for us—and I understand that philosophically we're very much apart, and I respect because at least you have a philosophy and I respect that in people. We have a different philosophy.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): What's the Liberals'?

Mr Pouliot: Well, I'll have to flip a coin on that one. My friends here, I don't talk about philosophy, nor Greek mythology. I might talk about nuclear physics, but not about philosophies.

This will only work if you reach one more time a happy balance, but when you invite confrontation, perception is important. When people see themselves under a state of siege, will it make the goal of this bill, which is having Ontario as a great place to invest, any easier?

We just wish to remind the minister, with the highest of respect, reconsider, look again, water your wine and we'll have a bill we can all live with.

Mr Stockwell: I rise to comment on the speech made by the member opposite from Hamilton. It's not a surprising speech. It was predictable, much the same as we had in last session when we were in opposition occupying very similar situations with respect to Bill 40. I recall the tricks that we tried in opposition as far as ringing the bells and reading into the record streams and rivers and so on and so forth.

Philosophically, we're miles apart though we're feet away. I understand it. I understand the breadth and the depth and the concern that he brings to this issue, but we fundamentally disagree. We don't hate anybody. We never have hated anybody, contrary to your speech. We just don't agree. We don't believe it works and we fundamentally came to the conclusion last election. For 40 days we debated this issue, and the people agreed with us. That's the democratic process. And I still accept the fact that there is opposition across the floor.

What I have profound difficulty with—

Mr Bisson: There are more changes. There are changes in this bill that you guys have never even talked about.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Cochrane South is out of order.

Mr Stockwell: —are the members opposite in the Liberal Party who apparently stood side by side with us and debated the merits of our position in opposition to Bill 40. Now they come here today upon introduction of rescinding Bill 40, and you know what the Liberals are? They're opposed to that as well.

He speaks in this place of the passionate concern, his passionate belief and passionate opposition to our bill. The clearest thing the member from Windsor-Walkerville is saying today is that he could be passionate about anything. He could be passionate on either side of the issue. The member for Windsor-Walkerville agrees with everybody. No wonder—he's a Liberal.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton Centre has two minutes to respond.

Mr Christopherson: First, let me thank the member for Windsor-Walkerville for his comments. I have also pointed out some of the discrepancies in the Liberal positioning over this issue and a few others, but I have nothing but the greatest respect and admiration for the job that my colleague from Windsor-Walkerville is doing on behalf of his constituents and the way that I think he personally believes on this issue. I thank him for his contribution and support on this issue as we work together.

My colleague from Lake Nipigon has always been one of the most eloquent members of this House. I believe that he shares the same understanding and belief that I do on this issue and the damage that it'll do to real people and how it will hurt working people, and I thank him for his comments.

My colleague from Etobicoke West, a colleague from the past session, we've had many debates on many issues. I continue to have great respect for him as an individual and continue to disagree with him on just about every issue he and I debate. This is no different. But it's always enjoyable to listen to the member for Etobicoke West. I only wish that the politics of your party were such that we got to hear from you a little more often.

In closing, I want to say—

Mr Pouliot: He's underutilized.

Mr Christopherson: That's no slight against him. That's a mistake on the part of management.

I want to say in closing that at times I have become very emotional and been very loud and very passionate in my comments. That stems from my own background and my own beliefs and my sincere feeling that this is going to hurt people beyond your ideology and that you needn't hurt people this much to deal with the new situation we find ourselves in as a province.

The Speaker: Further debate, the member from Hamilton East.

Mr Agostino: There are a few minutes left today. I'll wrap up tomorrow. But first of all, I speak in opposition to the government's bill. Bill 7 goes much deeper than anything Bill 40 ever contained. I guess what is ironic and disturbing in all of this is that a bill of such magnitude, a bill of such depth and a bill that has potential for creating so much pain and hardship for working men and women across this province is going to be rammed through by this government by November 2.

Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think our member was actually standing in regular rotation and I believe that because he was in the back, maybe he wasn't seen. But I appeal to you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I didn't recognize the member for London South and I didn't see him standing. If it's my mistake, I'm sorry about that, but I recognized the member for Hamilton East.

Mr Agostino: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, it is ironic with such a bill that this government determines that they're going to close debate and put the bill through by November 2.

This bill fundamentally will change the way business, unions and workers in this province deal with each other. This bill is going to have tremendous potential for violence on the picket line. This bill is going to have tremendous impact on the ability of working men and women to carry out their job, to be able to work on the shop floor without fear of harassment. They won't be able to do the things that over the years they worked hard for, the rights as members of unions in this province they've achieved.

This government has the nerve to sit here and say that it's not worthy of debate in this House. Yes, you had your 40 days during the campaign. Yes, you won the election. But this not a puppet democracy here. This is not some third-rate banana republic that you're running. This is the province of Ontario.

Debate in this House should be full and people should be given the opportunity to speak in this House and speak in committees. You don't have the right to rule. You're not God. You have the right to govern, you've got that right, but there's also responsibility with that, and that responsibility is to ensure that democracy is served properly. You don't serve democracy properly by ramming through a bill of such significance.

Are you afraid to hear from the working men and women of this province? Are you afraid to hear from people? Are you afraid of what they're going to tell you? Are you afraid that you don't like what you're going to see at the committees?

The Speaker: Order. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1801.

ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
14	368	2	57	named Jan Dymond to spruce up the minister's image.
	369	1	4	Dymond would find it interesting, being part of a
	369	1	57	Dymond is not an image consultant. Perhaps the large
	369	1	60	Dymond's role.
	375	1	15	well over \$90 million. We literally cut or froze every

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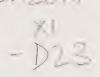
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de l'Ontario



Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 octobre 1995

The House met at 1332. Prayers.

ESTIMATES

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I have a message from the Administrator of the government, signed by his own hand.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): All rise, please. The Administrator of the government transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending 31 March 1996 and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS NATIONAL UNITY

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): At this very important time in our country's history, I would like to acknowledge the work of a great Canadian in my riding, Norm Lalonde, and his committee.

Around the Cornwall area, Mr Lalonde is known as "Mr Canada" since for many years he has coordinated the Canada Week celebrations. This past year he organized a Unity Scroll, a message from ordinary Canadians about the importance of a united Canada. So far, more than 9,000 people have signed the scroll, which will be presented to the Prime Minister later this week.

Next Monday's vote in Quebec has many of my constituents worried about the future of our country. Practically speaking, there are many residents in my riding who work in Quebec and there are many who reside in Quebec but work in the Cornwall area.

Many Canadians have been making their voices heard in these past weeks and will continue to do so through public demonstrations for a united Canada in this final week leading up to the referendum.

I've also received from Calvin Preddie his own design of a T-shirt that sums up the feeling of members in this House, myself, Norm Lalonde, Calvin Preddie, Kevin Bradshaw and many of my constituents. It reads, "We chose a united Canada, a cherished nation from sea to sea to sea." I would like to express my support for a united Canada and I encourage all to do the same.

FOOD SHOPPING LIST

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Last Friday, the Minister of Community and Social Services finally released his long-awaited shopping list. His list was supposed to be a commonsense shopping list, a lesson for single people on welfare, the assertion being that a person who lost his or her job somehow forgot how to shop and needed a reminder in commonsense shopping.

Myself and a number of people in my riding on Saturday decided it would be a good idea to see just how much common sense existed in the Tsubouchi shopping list. Guess what we found out after shopping à la Tsubouchi? The \$90 list cost closer to \$110 no matter where we went and shopped. The list, if followed, would not even meet the bare minimum standard for nutrition as set out in the Canada Food Guide.

The list even lacked some of the essentials we in the civilized world take for granted. The single on welfare could not wash, as no soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, shaving cream or any of the necessities needed to keep one clean was on the list. How would a prospective employer view an applicant for employment after just a few days on this stinky diet? I guess since the Harris government took power, employers in this province have lowered their standards. We certainly know that the Harris government is an anti-worker government, but I never thought they'd stoop to these lengths to prove it.

I believe that this government, like any good government, should lead by example. I challenge Mr Tsubouchi and the Premier to practise what they preach. Let them live on this diet of misery and see how they feel, or should I say how they smell after 30 days. After 30 days, I assure you that the hunger pangs would change their views on the world and, who knows, they might just call for a stop to this class war they're starting in this province.

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): It is very timely for me to speak on the importance of national unity.

On Sunday, October 29, a unity rally will be held in the city of Barrie in my riding of Simcoe Centre. This non-partisan rally is organized by everyday citizens who have a deep sense of national pride. The rally will start at 2:30 in the afternoon at Barrie's Memorial Square.

This is a fitting location because it is the same place where we honour those brave Canadians who made the supreme sacrifice. It is also where a few people recently got together on their own initiative and built a beautiful flag display. This engineering wonder shows the maple leaf as a torch encircled by a ring of flags from each province and territory, all displayed at equal angles and height on a single pole, a symbol that Canadian strength comes from the sum of all of its parts.

We should not be silent about our commitment to this great country. I invite all members of this House to join the people of Simcoe Centre on October 29 to show our commitment to Canada and genuine affection for our good friends and neighbours in Quebec.

MAISON DE L'ÎLE DU CHENAIL

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): Last Sunday, I had the honour and the privilege of participating in a ceremony officially inaugurating the town of Hawkesbury's Maison de l'île du Chenail as a heritage site.

En désignant la Maison de l'Île à titre de bien culturel, architectural et historique, la ville de Hawkesbury assure la conservation et met en évidence un des rares trésors de son patrimoine municipal, tout en faisant une contribution importante au développement touristique de la région.

J'aimerais partager avec vous quelques faits saillants de la Maison de l'île :

Construite en 1810, la Maison de l'Île représente un des rares bâtiments du XIX^e siècle encore en existence à Hawkesbury. Une des techniques de construction utilisée à l'époque de sa construction, soit celle des billots côte à côte, équarris et aplanis sur le dessus, est très rare et probablement unique dans la région.

In the early 19th century, the Maison de l'Île belonged to the Hamiltons, important businessmen in the area who ran the lumber mill renowned nationally and internationally for its forest products. The Maison de l'Île also once belonged to the Honourable John C. Abbott, Canada's second Prime Minister.

Monsieur le Président, je félicite le Comité du patrimoine de Hawkesbury ainsi que les membres du conseil municipal d'avoir eu la vision de conserver ce site historique pour l'appréciation des générations futures.

1340

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): For over a week now, members of this caucus have been talking about the various and assorted Mulroney hacks, flunkies, bagmen and toadies picked up off the junk heap by the Harris government to serve as their staff people.

The Harris government inherited the largest part of the Mulroney brain trust, and if that ain't an oxymoron, nothing is. You see, Speaker, there's one more, Jayne Sutherland, the executive assistant to the Tory-Harris House leader. Well, by God, if she wasn't one of the staffers for Mulroney's House leader, Harvie Andre.

Unlike some people, I'm not at all concerned about that, because these are the same people who made Brian Mulroney one of the most hated Premiers—the most hated Prime Minister—in all of Canada. These are the Tory-Mulroney hack staffers who reduced the federal Tory party to but two members. They hold their caucus meetings in a phone booth.

So I can but encourage Harris, if there are any more of these Mulroney hacks floating around whose unemployment insurance has long expired and who aren't prepared to live on the Tsubouchi \$90-a-month food budget, well, by God, I'm encouraging Mike Harris and his gang to hire many more of them, because they'll end up in the same phone booth as Jean Charest and his sole cohort.

This Premier will end up being the most hated and despised Premier in Ontario as Brian Mulroney is the Prime Minister of Canada.

DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Tomorrow, we'll be celebrating the 50th anniversary of service by the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health

Unit. We're delighted to have the parliamentary assistant for the Ministry of Health, Mrs Helen Johns, as the guest speaker.

Because of spadework carried out by the Durham Federation of Agriculture and the women's institutes, the Northumberland and Durham county councils appointed a board of health in 1945. From the beginning, the health unit conducted many activities throughout the area, including mass immunizations, provision of maternity care, monitoring of public water supplies and dealing with tuberculosis.

The health unit's geography and responsibilities have changed and grown dramatically since then. It now works to ensure conditions in which we can all live healthier lives.

The district health unit has offices in Port Hope, Brighton, Campbellford, Lindsay and Haliburton. Activities are carried out in cooperation with many community members, including nurses, physicians, dentists, nutritionists and many, many volunteers.

It is community-based approaches like this one that will allow us to continue to help people improve the quality of their health while controlling spending.

Congratulations to the leaders and staff of the Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Unit on achieving 50 successful years of working with and serving their public.

NORTHWESTERN GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I've just come back from a rally in support of Northwestern hospital in my riding attended by over 1,000 people. At that rally, it was made very clear that this hospital was built by the community. It was started by Canon Jackson, who raised money door to door in 1949 to serve the people of middle Metro, the city of York, and it has served the people with excellence over the last 40 years.

At that rally, it was made abundantly clear that a hospital that serves people and is part of the family of the city of York should be protected from closure, especially when it provides a completely integrated service. Hopefully, the Minister of Health will look at this hospital as a centre of excellence, protect it and ensure that it will go on serving the community of Metro and the city of York for the next 40 years.

I hope this ministry and this government tread very, very carefully before they start closing hospitals, especially a community hospital, a neighbourhood hospital, like Northwestern.

NATIONAL UNITY UNITÉ NATIONALE

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Today, I rise to talk about an issue of great importance to all Ontarians, indeed to all Canadians, and that is national unity.

As all in this chamber are aware, Quebeckers will be making a choice on Monday, a choice between continuing to work to improve Confederation and Quebec's place in our nation, or a path to separation.

Les Ontariens et les Ontariennes partagent avec les Québécois et les Québécoises depuis des siècles des liens de plus en plus serrés. Ces liens entre nos deux provinces sont assez forts pour survivre le débat actuel et s'épanouir pour les générations à venir.

It is my profound hope that Quebec votes no to separation from the rest of Canada. It is my profound belief that at heart Quebeckers share the same concerns and hopes that we do in Ontario, a concern about jobs and the economy and a hope for the future of our children. It is only within a federal framework that we can make the changes necessary to meet our economic and cultural aspirations.

Saying no really means saying yes to continuing the process of evolution of our federation. Voting yes is a vote for an uncertain future, for Quebec and for all of us.

By all accounts Canada is the best country in which to live. A united Canada provides the best foundation for all of us to achieve all of our goals.

BREAST CANCER

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): Breast cancer is the most frequently occurring type of cancer among women. In 1995, almost 7,000 Ontario women will be diagnosed with cancer of the breast. That means that one in nine women will be diagnosed. In 1995, 2,000 women, or one in 23 women, will die of breast cancer.

Incidence of breast cancer starts to rise after the age of 25, although the majority of cases occur after the age of 55. It is a disease that often strikes women in the prime of their life, at the peak of their work and family responsibilities. This is not only a women's health issue; husbands, children and families of these women are affected as well.

It was my pleasure to attend the opening of the Marvelle Koffler breast cancer clinic at Mount Sinai Hospital Monday evening with the Minister of Health, the Honourable Jim Wilson.

What is unique about this centre is that it resulted from the efforts of one individual who recognized a need and took action on her own. Mrs Koffler's incentives to improve the experience of women dealing with breast cancer sprang from her own personal experiences in the health system. Modelling the centre upon a clinic she visited in New York, Mrs Koffler has created a more sensitive and reassuring atmosphere for women.

It is a place that will cater to the sensitivities of women's health issues, something that this government is proud to be associated with.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ESTIMATES

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The 1995-96 expenditure estimates I am tabling today were prepared by ministries in anticipation that they would have been presented to the Legislature this past spring. However, because the previous government decided not to recall the House in March, the estimates were never presented.

In these circumstances, we are tabling the estimates quickly to permit the standing committee on estimates to review the government's spending plan. The most practical and expedient way to do this is to table the

estimates prepared by the ministries from the previous government.

As members are aware, the estimates are an integral component of the annual process for the government to obtain legal spending authority from the Legislature.

On July 21, my colleague the Minister of Finance gave a fiscal statement and outlined initial spending cuts directed towards returning the province to fiscal responsibility and accountability, and putting Ontario on the road to economic recovery.

I am also providing members with tables that outline, on a ministry-by-ministry basis, the changes to total spending plans made by this government. These tables show the expenditure cuts this government has already made to the programs included in the estimates I am tabling today. These changes form part of the overall spending adjustments announced by the Minister of Finance on July 21 and reported to this House by me on September 28.

Ministries will provide the standing committee with detailed briefing materials that more fully explain our government's spending plans for this fiscal year.

In addition, I am shortly to table supplementary estimates in the House to provide spending authority for capital grants. These supplementary estimates will reflect the conversion of the previous government's capital loans to grants. This is in keeping with the advice from the Provincial Auditor.

Since taking office in late June, this government has been working diligently to put Ontario's finances in order and will continue to do so. The Minister of Finance will present a fall economic and fiscal statement providing further details.

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Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I'd like to point out that it's about time that the estimates were tabled in this House by the minister so that we can finally begin to determine where—the details of the pain that will be unleashed by all these expenditure cuts will become much more apparent at that time, and I think we've been asking for this for some time.

I think it becomes abundantly clear that this government intends to provide very little alternative to those people out there who will be most hurt by these cuts. That's really the defining moment in all this, that the government is saying—we're all for efficiency on this side of the House, and I think everyone recognizes and agrees, every single member in this House agrees that there is a debt and deficit problem, and everyone agrees that that needs to be dealt with. But I think what has become very clear is that this government is to provide no alternative for people who are on social assistance. There is nothing for them to do other than to witness this 21% cut, with no alternative coming forth from the Minister of Community and Social Services, from any other minister, any other member of the government.

I think it's very clear—and in this I make reference to the election campaign—when speaking to my constituents I told them, "Beware of what's being proposed by this party, this Conservative Party, because they're going to take us back to the Diefenbaker era," and that struck fear in the hearts of many of my constituents because they remember that as not a very nice time indeed in which to have lived. It was very difficult.

But it becomes clear to me, and I've come to understand this now, that this government not only wants to take us there, they want to take us further. They want to take us back to a Victorian era when you had to bleed patients in an effort to try and make them feel better, and that's what being done here. It was voodoo medicine and now we're getting voodoo economics. In a sense, I think it's very clear that this government is to provide no alternative for those people who are suffering out there as a result of their cuts.

We will indeed look forward to detailed estimates of what these expenditure cuts will mean for communities right across Ontario that have yet to find out the real consequences. The minister stands up each and every day, along with some of his colleagues, to announce with great fanfare all of these cuts, but what does it really mean to people out there in the communities?

I think we're beginning to see evidence of that each and every day, but in other communities where the cuts have not been dealt with, the cuts have not been felt, I think we'll begin to see the true response from the public out there as to what that means, and every single member of this government will be subject to those questions around what the details will mean for each of their communities. When that begins to happen, I think we're going to hear a different tune from members of the government.

These expenditure cuts are going to—again going back to where the cuts are being made: education and training, \$229 million; health care, a solid commitment of the government not to touch health care and they say they will put that money back into use in the health care budget. That remains to be seen. We will see through the expenditure process whether that is actually going to take place over the next year or two or three, and we'll see what impact that has on each and every one of your communities, because that's where the real pain will be felt.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): As I think everyone in the House recognizes, we had requested that the government prepare a budget and present a budget. Every single year in the history of this province, every single year, we have had a budget. That's the document that the Legislature and the public can understand and debate the finances of the province. But for the first time in the history of the province, we will not have a budget.

What we've got today is, in my opinion, an attempt to sneak through the estimates. They'll want them dealt with over the next few weeks with as little debate as possible, and this has become the hallmark of this government: no debate, no illustration of what they're doing. Later today we're dealing with a motion that will cut off debate on the most significant piece of labour legislation in the history of this province, all dealt with in a matter of days.

What we see here today is typical: no budget; no opportunity for the people in this province to understand

where this government is coming from on the finances; tabling of estimates that are now six months old; a very limited opportunity for debate on them; and a very limited opportunity for the people of this province to have their voices heard against this government.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): We know that the Minister of Finance is going to be bringing down some kind of a statement later on in the month, when he will indicate to all of the transfer partners how much pain they're going to have to bear as a result of this government's approach to economic life.

Hon David Johnson: Because of your deficit.

Mr Rae: I did not heckle the member for York East when he was making his points—

Hon David Johnson: Don Mills.

Mr Rae: —and I would hope he wouldn't heckle me on a subject as fundamental to the province as the estimates, though if he chooses to do so, we will govern ourselves accordingly.

I think it's an interesting fact that in preparing the cuts within a couple of ministries—I've learned, for example, that the accounting firm of Ernst and Young was hired by the government to provide advice to the government and indeed to plan for the government the nature of the cuts that are being made. In the Ministry of Community and Social Services, we understand from many of the agencies involved that the staff in the ministry say they have nothing to do with the decisions on cuts, that these have all been made by Ernst and Young in terms of the advice that's been provided. We haven't seen those reports. We would like to see those reports.

I've heard from the Sharbot Lake health centre that they're now engaged in a battle with the Ministry of Community and Social Services over whether in fact they own the health centre which has been in place since the early 1970s, which has now been shut down as a result of the unilateral decisions taken by this government.

These numbers simply tell a very small part of the story. We would have so many questions to raise about these if we were able to have a proper budget discussion, either now or we'll no doubt be able to raise them in the spring when we have the proper budget made available.

For example, we're now advised, and we now hear and learn, that the Ministry of Community and Social Services has plans to shift part of its budget over to the Ministry of Health. I would raise the issue with my colleagues and ask, does that mean that the \$17.4-billion envelope which is referred to in the Tory Common Sense Revolution as the envelope which will be maintained will then receive this additional, very significant Gains-D and they can turn around and, having cut all the institutional side and having cut the hospitals to smithereens, come back in five years and say, "Look, the health budget is still intact" because it's now had whole other areas added on which it previously did not have?

The story, which I still don't think enough has been said about—and I know there are members of the press here, and I hope they're listening very carefully to the story that's yet to be told—is that the real agenda of this government is to cut taxes for the wealthiest citizens of

the province and to cut services in order to pay for that tax cut. Right through the piece—

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): Propaganda.

Mr Rae: I'm glad I've got the attention of the minister responsible for women's issues, because we're going to have some very real questions for her. She is one of the executioners of programs and services which have been vital for the women of this province for a long time.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Name them, Bob.

Mr Rae: I will name them. You be patient. I'll name them. You hang on. Don't you worry.

We see, across the board, services which provide for the most vulnerable—a service in Ottawa I heard about just yesterday, a farm where people who are severely disabled go to work and provide for themselves; the one bit of work they get to do, that farm for the physically and mentally disabled is being closed by the cuts that are being imposed by this government.

The Tories ran saying they could have cuts and it wouldn't hurt; they could have cuts and it would only be good for the economy. They are wrong. They are wrong, and we will show they are wrong, and the people who are vulnerable in this province know they are wrong. They know they're being asked to pay the price for the rich who are going to be the primary beneficiaries of the tax cut. That's what's wrong with Tory Ontario, that's what's wrong with the Tory vision and that's why we're going to continue to work so hard against it.

ORAL QUESTIONS MINISTRY ADVISORS

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services, who we are pleased to see has been allowed to return from exile. Minister, Friday, you'll remember, was the day you released your shopping list, but you refused to stay around and discuss it. There was a newspaper report, which the Premier has since essentially confirmed, that you have hired Jan Dymond, an image maker.

Now, as you know, Ms Dymond is not being paid out of Conservative Party funds, she is being paid out of public funds, and so I think the public deserves an accounting of how much money is being spent and how it is being spent. Minister, I ask if you would please tell the public the length of Ms Dymond's contract, the total amount she is being paid, how much she is being paid on a daily or an hourly rate, and was this contract put out to public tender or even the more limited RFP route before it was given to this well-known Mulroney adviser?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): Thank you for that kind welcome back; I appreciate it.

I think it's very important to understand here, first of all, that this company was not hired by myself as the minister, it was hired by the ministry, and it was hired specifically to assist us with our long-term programs.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The member for Lake Nipigon is out of order, as are several others. Order. Supplementary.

Mrs McLeod: If it's time for the supplementary, I gather the answer was that the minister didn't hire Ms Dymond, the ministry did. Clearly, there is no one in charge of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and that's more and more apparent. But beyond that, Minister, I really do think that there is something rather rotten here, and it is not the 69-cent mythical tins of tuna that you keep talking about in this Legislature.

As you say, the ministry hired Ms Dymond. You have a large and, I'm sure, a very excellent communications staff within your ministry now. You have people who will write speeches for you and advise you how to deliver them. You have people who can advise you on how to deal with the media. You even have people, as we have seen, who will speak for you on those days when you decide, or the Premier decides, that it's time for you to disappear. You have all kinds of senior staff who could advise you on matters of policy and organizational structure.

So I ask you, Minister, to tell me, at a time when you're telling poor people in this province that they can get by on two pieces of bread without even so much as a pat of butter to help them go down, at a time when you're asking poor people to live on a \$91-a-month food diet, why are you living off a \$1,200-a-day image diet?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Unfortunately, I think what is rotten here is your ability to listen. In fact, that wasn't the end of the answer. You failed to hear the rest of it, as I had continued. I had said that this company is here specifically to assist with the long-term projects and programs of this government such as our commitment to workfare.

I ought to tell you this right now: We consider it very important for us to have a two-way dialogue with people out there who are going to be affected by the workfare program, and this means people who are on social assistance, it means our front-line workers, it means anyone who is going to have to implement this program.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Cochrane South is out of order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'm going to tell you something right now. This is all part of our dialogue right now and I'll tell you something: We are taking the lead, unlike prior governments, in terms of consultation. Right now, I'll tell you, it's very easy to stand up and be self-righteous. However, we have already met with several groups in the disabled community, such as Christian Horizons, Ontario Association for Community Living, People First of Ontario, Special Services at Home Family Alliance, Great Lakes Society for Development Services of Ontario, Federation of Ontario Facility Liaison Groups, and they have agreed to work with us to help formulate policies and directions for the disabled community. This is part of our program to consult people—

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: —the families and the caregivers of this province who unfortunately—

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: —the other parties have disregarded.

Mrs McLeod: The minister was so determined to finish his scripted answer that he failed to hear the supplementary question. The supplementary question was indeed related to the fact that you have an excellent ministry staff who are able to provide you with the communications assistance that you so clearly need, as well as with the policy and organization advice that I'm sure people in the communities that are being affected by the daily decisions that you're making without consultation would be delighted to help you with.

Minister, I suggest that you do indeed have a communications problem and, more than that, I truly suggest that you have a comprehension problem, because I don't believe you understand what it is that you're doing and the effect it has on those people you're talking to. More than that, you consistently tell us one thing in the House and then we find out that the reality is quite a different thing, so let me give you one more example.

Over a month ago you told us that you were going to hire in your constituency office a financial planner and the role of that financial planner would be to give advice to those people who were affected by the welfare cuts.

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mrs McLeod: We called the office this week, Mr Speaker, and guess what? There is no financial planner. In fact, your office gave us a number to call at your ministry and the person who answered the phone there said they don't give advice, they just explain the system, if they can keep up with it.

Minister, how is it that when you promise a financial adviser to poor people, the adviser fails to materialize, but when you need a personal adviser, they're right there on the spot?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition has not got access to exactly what our plan is. I spoke late last week to the local newspaper and indicated to them that this program will be starting in November and, in fact, I have an opportunity now to mention the gentleman's name. His name is Harry James—he is with Ross Dixon Financial—who is not being paid, incidentally. He is donating his time to assist people on social assistance.

This is an example of the type of volunteerism and community spirit that the Premier and I were speaking of before, of how communities have a responsibility to assist their own community.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question was going to be to the Premier, but in his absence, to the Minister of Finance. I would say first, on behalf of everyone, we're very pleased to see you back, all of us.

I did want to follow up on your government's plans for the finances of the province. Many times in the House your government has said the deficit is the single biggest financial problem facing the province and, frankly, I think we all agree with that. You're asking people like the children's aid societies and people on social assistance, children on social assistance and seniors to fight that deficit problem.

The problem we have with the message is that at the same time as you're asking all of those people to fight the deficit, you're also planning a very major tax cut. In fact, in your own documents, on the direct fiscal impact of the Common Sense Revolution, it says here you're going to cut \$6 billion and then you're going to give a \$5-billion tax break and you're going to reduce the deficit by \$1 billion. In other words, all of the people in the province are being asked to cut expenditures by \$6 billion, but for every \$6 saving, \$1 goes to reduce the deficit and \$5 goes for the tax cut.

1410

Can you explain to people like the children's aid society and mothers on social assistance the logic of them fighting the deficit problem saving \$6 when only \$1 will go to fight the deficit and \$5 goes into a tax break? It is not unlike your old six-and-five program, but a very different six and five: six expenditure cut, five tax break. Can you explain the logic of that to those people?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): To the honourable member: I think that he misrepresents the financial and fiscal policies of this government. As he well knows, when we assumed office if we had not taken any action the actual deficit figure for this fiscal year 1995-96 would have been in the neighbourhood of \$10.6 billion for this year alone. We immediately took steps to reduce that by almost \$2 billion of expenditure reductions in-year, and we are on target to meet that target for this fiscal year of \$8.7 billion.

He is correct that had the fiscal situation been what it was projected to be by the previous government in its April 27 statement, and other statements by the previous government, we would have only had to cut \$6 billion in expenditures. But that wasn't reality, that didn't turn out to be reality, and in fact we will have to cut even more to get a handle on expenditure reduction levels for this fiscal year.

I might also point out to the honourable member that the tax reduction of which he speaks he knows full well will not be felt in one fiscal year alone.

Mr Phillips: I'm using your direct fiscal impact of the Common Sense Revolution. It says program spending cuts \$6 billion, tax cut \$5 billion, reduce deficit by \$1 billion. That's in one year—one year. You are cutting—

Interjections.

Mr Phillips: Well, then you don't understand your own program, because you are cutting. You're asking everyone to join the fight on the deficit.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Mr Phillips: You're asking everyone to join the fight on the deficit—people on welfare with two children cut by \$3,000—and at the same time you are going to give—

there are 50,000 people in this province making over \$150,000. You are going to give them a \$5,000-a-year tax break. Two hundred and fifty million dollars will be going to people making over \$150,000. Can you explain to all of those people who are working for children's aid organizations, mothers on welfare, the logic of giving a \$250-million tax break to people making over \$150,000 while you're asking them to cut, cut, cut, and if they cut \$6, \$5 of that cut goes to a tax break? Can you explain the logic of that?

Hon Mr Eves: To the honourable member: He knows full well that it was never intended and does not say in the Common Sense document that this full impact of the tax reduction will happen in one year. He knows that in our first three full budgets we will achieve the personal income tax reduction that we had projected to achieve in the Common Sense Revolution document.

He also fails to recognize that those tax cuts will leave money in the hands of taxpayers across the province of Ontario, not just those who make \$150,000 a year or more. And he also does not point out, I say to him, the effect of the employer health tax, which his government introduced, which we are going to take away and replace with a much more progressive system that will tax those very people who make \$150,000 a year that he's complaining about.

Mr Phillips: This becomes more troubling, because the minister doesn't understand his own plan. The \$5,000 tax break to those people includes them paying that tax levy. You don't understand your own plan, Minister. The government doesn't understand its own plan.

I'll follow up, and again I say to the people of this province—it's not me speaking. This is straight out of what they call the Common Sense Revolution, where it says very clearly, "We're going to cut \$6 billion, and \$5 billion of that \$6 billion will go to a tax break."

I want to continue on the tax break, because in the next four years, by your own estimates, Minister, you will lose \$15 billion of revenue to this tax break. That's not me speaking; that's from your own document: \$15 billion. Every penny of that \$15 billion you have to borrow. We continue to run deficits to the year 2001. Every penny, you have to borrow. The interest payments alone for the next four years on that tax break are \$2.6 billion.

Can you explain to the people of Ontario the logic of borrowing \$15 billion to give a tax break when you say the deficit is your single biggest financial problem to solve?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member knows full well that it will not cost us \$15 billion over the next four years. He knows that in the third full budget year of implementation, we will then get up to the neighbourhood of \$5 billion a year, in the third full year of the tax cut. There's 15% in the first full budget year: 7.5% followed by 7.5%. So he doesn't take that into account in his calculations.

We will not have to borrow, as he puts it, \$15 billion to meet that commitment, and he doesn't take into account the stimulation of the economy by leaving money

in the hands of taxpayers. Now, I understand that he doesn't understand that philosophy, because the previous two governments increased taxes 65 times over the past 10 years.

I know they don't understand that if you leave money in the hands of hardworking, honest, taxpaying Ontarians it will actually stimulate the economy. If the solution was simply to tax more and spend more, we wouldn't be in a recession right now, because those two parties are living proof that that has not worked over the last 10 years.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I have a question for the minister of women's issues, since she was so quick to ask me to name examples of where cuts were being made.

Minister, I'm sending you over a copy of a letter that the member for Riverdale has received from Julie Lee, who is the executive director of the London Battered Women's Advocacy Centre.

I'm very troubled by the contents of this letter because in it Ms Lee says that on Friday last, a meeting was held in the minister's constituency office with respect to funding for services to women in need in the London area. She says that in addition to being advised that not only was there no money for this year, there was going to be even less for next year, and that more serious cuts could be expected in the near future.

She goes on to say this, and I have to quote it: "Very quickly after this meeting, I took note of what she said to us. Ms Cunningham"—referring to the minister—"said, 'Within the context of this government, you need to understand that groups or agencies that are seen not to be working with this government, providing an oppositional voice [at this point she made reference to Harmony House, an Ottawa second-stage housing project which has been strongly voicing opposition to the cuts] will be audited and their funding eliminated."

There were others at this meeting who were also present who, I am reliably informed, are prepared to indicate that this is in fact what the minister said. I would like to ask the minister how she can possibly justify taking this kind of position in discussions which she is having with people who are providing such necessary services in the province.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): I just received the letter. I haven't read it. I'm trying to listen to the leader of the third party, and I will respond in this regard.

1420

Those words are not my words. I never made that statement. My staff was there making notes. I should tell you also that this was tried on the London Free Press, who checked around to see if I did make these statements. As a matter of fact, obviously I didn't, because she wouldn't even print it. The article that was in the London Free Press on Saturday did not obtain these words because this was not printed.

Mr Rae: Obviously these are words which are not lightly used by the author of this letter. Again, if you look at the bottom of the letter, you'll see that "Mary

Ellen Mellanson, the executive director of London Second Stage Housing, has been supported by her board of directors (who were also in attendance at this meeting), to come forward and confirm Dianne Cunningham's statement as noted above."

Now we have clearly here a minister who denies making such a statement, and we have people in the community who insist that this statement was made—who insist that it was made—and who are not afraid to come forward and who are very clear in their assertion that these words were used.

I want to ask the minister, how can you explain how people who were present at the meeting are now clearly indicating that in fact this is what was said, that people were told that if they expressed opposition their organizations would be audited and they would be shut down, and that this gives rise to an atmosphere of genuine and deep fear among groups that are working in the community? How could she explain how such a comment would come to be made?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I think that these kinds of letters—and I've met with literally hundreds of people in the last few weeks, and I've never, ever had anybody write a letter like this. I have to tell you that this is the kind of letter that does instil fear in our communities. This is not representative of the conversation. For those of you who know me in this House, I encourage people to speak in opposition to this government and give us good ideas about what they're concerned about and how we can find solutions to the problems.

For you to pursue this argument right now is not in the best interests of anyone. If someone wants to make those statements, it's up to them to prove them. I would suggest that my staff was in the room and I didn't make it, and I want everybody in this House to know that if we're going to solve the problems facing Ontario today, we're not going to make any excuses for creating an environment where people can work, go to school, have hope for the future, and, yes, the decisions right now will be tough ones, but I can assure you that in the future, if we don't make these decisions, there will be no second-stage housing or any supports for women who have been victims of sexual assault.

Mr Rae: Having been a first minister, I can tell you there are many occasions when allegations are made against ministers. Indeed, they've been made by various opposition members. But here we have a statement that's attributed to the minister in a private meeting and which the press was not permitted to attend, in which we have several people who apparently are prepared to indicate that—

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Well, they weren't with the Free Press, were they?

Mr Rae: The minister's shouting out and I was talking—because obviously in a climate which this government has established that intimidation is now the order of the day—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Rae: I don't know. There is a very specific set of

statements that the minister makes about organizations being audited and their funding eliminated. Now, can the minister explain how somebody would come away from a meeting, not simply with an impression—

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Not just one person.

Mr Rae: And not just one person come away with an impression of the fact that funding was going to be difficult, which everybody in the province understands, but how it would possibly be that people who operate one way, that is to say by talking publicly in opposition to the government, how it is that their organizations would be subject to an audit and how their funding would be eliminated? How would somebody come away with that kind of an impression unless something to that effect was said? How could they possibly come away with it?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Well, I don't know how they could come away with that kind of thinking. I clearly left the meeting with two thoughts: First of all, I have been in touch with the Minister of Community and Social Services around all of the second-stage housing projects, because we are looking to solutions and we do intend to keep the core program there. That's the first message that I left with this particular group.

The second message I left to the group was that we are looking for solutions to the tremendous challenges that we face in Ontario today. I can tell you that I have been in touch with five of the women who attended that meeting who did not raise this issue with me at all, nor would they support the author of this letter.

In closing, I would like to say, if in fact the leader of the third party is trying to intimidate me in the work that I'm doing on behalf of the women in this province, it won't work, because we intend to provide the programs that are necessary and the core programs that we promised during the campaign and for which we have a very strong mandate on behalf of the citizens of this province.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Bob Rae (York South): I have a question, in the absence of the Premier, to the Deputy Premier. I understand that the argument the government is making for its decision to proceed so quickly with the labour relations changes, and to move the closure motion which we all know is being moved today, is because the consultation over labour relations took place in the Common Sense Revolution during the election.

I want to ask the Deputy Premier and House leader, in whose name the motion on closure will stand, where in the Common Sense Revolution it talks about stripping union rights from public servants in the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, where it talks about gutting and reducing the employee wage protection program and where it talks about making it easier for employers to instigate drives to decertify unions. Where exactly was this discussed during the election campaign in the Common Sense Revolution?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): The bill that is standing in the name of the Minister of Labour, Bill 7, is an effort on behalf of the government to re-establish

some sort of semblance of business and fairness in the province of Ontario. I understand that the leader of the third party and his party would not agree with the contents of Bill 7.

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): That's not the issue.

Hon Mr Eves: The issue, to the former Finance minister, is quite frankly that the pendulum in this province has swung too far the other way and that you have discouraged investment and people from investing in the province of Ontario.

That's what the issue is.

Mr Rae: I don't mind having a difference of opinion with the member for Parry Sound over the question of labour relations in the province. That's a healthy and normal thing to happen. In fact, I suspect we've had that discussion over many days and nights in the last 15 years. The issue is, this plan that you've brought in goes well beyond simply reversing Bill 40. It provides for changes in decertification of unions which are, if I may say so, seen by a great many employers as destabilizing. The Minister of Labour will know the number of representations she's heard in that regard.

It guts the wage protection program, which was never discussed by the Conservatives when they were in opposition, it was never referred to in the Common Sense Revolution and it impacts not on unions but on employees, including employees, for the most part, who have nothing to do with unions. It takes money directly out of their pockets. It also changes all of the rights with respect to crown employees and their rights in the future in the event of privatization.

These are very significant issues. They go well beyond the subject of Bill 40. I can't understand why someone who has always been so reasonable with respect to a process of listening to the public and giving people a chance to influence the government would be opposed to widespread public hearings across the province and why they would be so determined to simply shut debate down in the province, which is what they're doing with their bill today.

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the third party knows full well that one of the cornerstones of Bill 7, of course, is to provide for secret ballots and democratization of certification and decertification processes in the province of Ontario. I don't understand what anybody in an elected Parliament could have against that, but apparently his government did when they were in power, and they still object to it.

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With respect to wage protection, he will know that the province of Ontario will still have the best wage protection program and legislation in this country of Canada.

With respect to crown employees, the honourable member will know that we are in a very difficult deficit situation in the province of Ontario. To enable the province of Ontario to restructure government and do the essential things that government should be doing and free up government from doing things it should not be doing, these changes are necessary.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): So you're going to take it out on public sector workers.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Beaches-Woodbine is out of order.

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member will also know that an offer was made to his House leader in the form of government notice of motion number 1 on the order paper which would have provided for in excess of 40 hours of public hearings—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Four days.

Hon Mr Eves: —40 hours, 9 am to 10 pm, so in excess of 40 hours of public hearings, which would be the equivalent of eight weeks, of sending this bill to the resources development committee, an offer that his government House leader rejected this afternoon.

Mr Rae: Let's compare the record. Since you objected to Bill 40, and we know you did, what did we do on Bill 40? We had five weeks of public hearings in Toronto and six other cities—Kingston, London, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Windsor—we had eight days in committee for clause-by-clause, we had two days in committee of the whole, and we had two days for third reading debate. Prior to that we had a very long and extensive consultation and the bill was significantly amended.

Interjection.

Mr Rae: The Minister of Health is reverting to type now; it doesn't take long.

Interjections.

Mr Rae: Oh, now here we go.

The Speaker: The member for Simcoe West is out of order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for London Centre is continuously being out of order.

Mr Rae: That's the record. What I do not understand, and I say this quite sincerely to the member for Parry Sound, is how it is that you insisted on this kind of process—quite rightly, and we readily agreed to it—with respect to Bill 40, but when it comes to your own legislation, which moves far more significantly the other way in terms of where the rights are going—rights are being taken away which were there under Bill Davis, which were there under David Peterson, were there under Frank Miller, for goodness' sake, and they're not good enough for this government—those rights can be taken away and you shut down debate in less than a week.

I think we're entitled to ask, if the hearings across the province were good enough for Bill 40, why aren't they good enough for Bill 7?

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the third party knows that his party has prevented this Legislature, for about the last week and a half, from dealing with Bill 7. They've prevented a routine motion being introduced to establish committees.

They don't even want to establish the committee to send Bill 7 to, let alone have any time. How can you have time in a committee when they won't even permit us to move a motion and pass it—which is a routine

thing—to have committees of the Legislature up and running?

He will also know that when Bill 40 was passed by the previous Minister of Labour, those hearings were held during a time when the House was not in session. He will also know that his Minister of Labour did not make one single change as a result of those hearings to that bill. You may have made changes that were conducive to labour, but you didn't listen to anything that was said.

Interjections.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): He's lying, Mr Speaker. The Deputy Premier is lying.

Hon Mr Eves: I ask the leader of the third party—

The Speaker: Would the member resume his seat, please. The member for Cochrane South, I heard a word that I don't think is parliamentary. Will he withdraw it.

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, how could I be accused of doing—I rephrase. I apologize.

Hon Mr Eves: Perhaps the leader of the third party can answer why his House leader turned down the offer for the equivalent of eight weeks of public hearings in the resources development committee, over 40 hours of public hearings.

Ms Lankin: Four days. Hon Mr Eves: Forty hours.

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

I think it's in order that I correct my own record. I had earlier indicated the member for London Centre. I meant the member for London North.

RENT REGULATION

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): My question today is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Fifty per cent of my constituents are renters, and I'm hoping he will clear the air on the issue of his government's policy on rent controls.

In today's paper, it's reported that last night the member for Eglinton, your colleague, who is the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, told a meeting of his constituents, "I can tell you very sincerely that there has been no discussion of rent control in the cabinet."

However, here in this House on October 3 when you were asked by my colleague, the member for Scarborough North, Mr Curling, "Yes or no, will you be abolishing rent control?" you replied, "Yes."

Minister, can you please tell me and the people of this province, is it the policy of your government to abolish, to scrap rent controls?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): As the member knows, the current system is not working. It's not fair for tenants, it's not fair for landlords. What we have said and what we've been very consistent in saying all along is that we intend to bring in tenants' protection, something that will provide protection to tenants that they don't have now.

I concur with my colleague, and at his meeting last night he said exactly the same thing: that the current system doesn't work and it has to be fixed. We intend to fix it, and we're going to ensure that tenants are protected.

Mrs Caplan: I have the copy of Hansard. I have your reply to my colleague, and I'm asking you today, in light of your own comments, is it the policy of your government, yes or no, to scrap rent control?

During the election the Conservative candidate sent around a pamphlet in my riding saying, "Mike Harris will not scrap rent control." What we've heard from you and your colleague the minister is that you will not scrap rent control. Are you standing by your statement to my colleague today? Are you going to scrap rent control? Yes or no.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I would be interested to know if the members would like to hear the answer. I would.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Will the members please come to order.

Hon Mr Leach: I can only assume that the member across has a hearing difficulty. What I said was that we intend to fix a system that is broken, that rent controls as they exist right now do not work. It's our intention to work to bring in an act that will provide tenants with protection, and when we have that ready, yes, we will remove a system that doesn't work.

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LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I have a question to the Deputy Premier and the government House leader. The government House leader knows that if this party or that party ever brought in the draconian time allocation motion that he has suggested and that he's going to be calling today—there has never been a time allocation motion like the one being presented by this government. If we'd ever brought anything like that in—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. I would like to hear the question.

Mr Cooke: If we ever brought a motion like that in, the government House leader, who was in the opposition then, would have been absolutely outraged.

On July 14, 1992, Mr Eves said during the debate on Bill 40: "The whole process is about having the public have its say, coming to committee for as long a period as possible—that's always negotiated," he said, "and hopefully the government of the day, with the persuasion of the public and the opposition members of the Legislature, will be able to persuade the government of the day to make some significant improvements to the piece of legislation."

That's the process as he saw it when he was over here. Why now has your government brought in a time allocation motion, without any negotiations, any discussion at all, that'll amount to four days, just to give a front for the government, no real public hearings in the province? What you told me today was, "You accept that or you get nothing."

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Perhaps the honourable member could explain why on Monday, October 16, Mr Christopherson moved first reading of a bill with a very lengthy title from 4:20 to 4:25; Mr Cooke—being himself—then moved for an adjournment of the House from 4:30 to 5; and why we have day after day of this going on for a week and a half, preventing the government from even moving a motion to establish committees. He says he wants this bill out to committee, but he won't even approve the routine motion to establish the committee to send it to.

Mr Cooke: There have been five days of discussion on Bill 7, a bill that has the most significant changes to the Ontario Labour Relations Act in the history of this province. That's a fact.

Yes, we engaged in some procedural wrangling, because we were asking your government for discussions about public hearings on Bill 7. If you had had those discussions, we could have come to some agreement about public hearings here and public hearings across the province.

And it's not just the opposition parties; it's some of your own members, like the member for Etobicoke West, who has publicly expressed concerns about the way your government is operating and the cutting off of any public participation.

I'm asking the government House leader whether he will agree right now to stand down the motion this afternoon, sit down with the opposition House leaders and negotiate public hearings across the province on Bill 7.

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member knows that we have offered over 40 hours of public hearings on this bill.

Mr Cooke: Four days.

Hon Mr Eves: He can call it four days if he wants. It's 9 am to 10 pm for those four days. Count the hours up. There's at least 40 hours in there—

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Cochrane South is out of order.

Hon Mr Eves: We've had five days of second reading debate on Bill 7—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Cochrane South, you're continuously out of order.

Hon Mr Eves: He has been offered 40 hours. I might say that if he hadn't wasted the House's time for a week and a half, he may have got more than 40 hours, but he chose to waste his time with procedural wrangling. That's how he chose to spend the time, and when offered 40 hours today, he said, "I'd rather have nothing." He may get his wish. He may get nothing.

PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): My question today is for the Minister of Health. Minister, in my riding of Lambton, in the town of Petrolia, we have a small local hospital serving a large rural area, and according to the

district health council study, this hospital will not be closed.

However, we have an aging medical practitioner population, and we also have lost two doctors in the past two years who have moved on to other areas. This, Mr Minister, makes it very difficult to provide 24-hour emergency service and to meet the needs of the constituents, yet it is impossible for this area to obtain underserviced designation. Why is it impossible to obtain underserviced designation?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): Mr Speaker, I can honestly tell you that's not the question that was planned.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Wilson: Seriously, my colleague the member for Lambton asked a very serious question on behalf of his constituents in Sarnia-Lambton. It's a question that many members of this House have asked me, both in the House in the last couple of weeks and in private conversations.

I reiterate and assure all members and the people of Ontario that we are currently in discussions with the Ontario Medical Association. Some members will be aware of the content of those discussions because the OMA has put out a newsletter to its members indicating some of the very serious points we're going over with them.

I can assure members that this government is ready to move with this issue. Right now in the city of Toronto we have some 40 communities from northern Ontario who have their annual fair which shows what a great place it is to be a physician in northern Ontario. The recruitment fair is on right now, and I'll be visiting that this afternoon. My parliamentary assistant visited it this afternoon already, as has the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

We will be assuring those communities again today that we will be moving very, very soon to bring solutions to this problem. We committed in the throne speech to moving on the Scott report. That commitment is firm, and I'm finding those reinvestment dollars so we can get ahead with that announcement in the near future.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Now you need to get some for us too.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

Mr Beaubien: I'm glad to see that our Minister of Health is very well versed in what he talks about.

My supplementary is to the Minister of Health again. Will this be addressed in the new report?

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Yes.

Hon Mr Wilson: "Yes" is easiest, I suppose. I always take advice from the people of Ontario, including the opposition in this House.

As I said, we're moving very quickly. I've had members from the Liberal Party, from the NDP send me notes, send me letters, have personal conversations in this House. What would be very helpful, to push along the Ontario Medical Association, to stress the urgency of this

issue with them so they can do that with their membership, would be if members would write the Ontario Medical Association; also explain to them, as you're explaining to me, how serious this matter is for areas like Sarnia-Lambton, for areas like the North Shore, for areas throughout Ontario, including my own, which is only an hour north of Toronto.

It's a serious matter. This government is committing to moving. We want to move in partnership with the physicians in this province, and members should direct their concerns also to the Ontario Medical Association so they know we mean business on behalf of the people of this province.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a question for the Minister of Health as well. Minister, as I'm sure you're aware, this morning at a press conference the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital announced that it is no longer able to guarantee trauma services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, due to a lack of needed specialists, specifically the departure of a third orthopaedic surgeon this past week.

This is the only trauma centre serving northwestern Ontario, the only one between Winnipeg and Sault Ste Marie. There are over 200,000 people who count on this service. Minister, such a situation causes great anxiety and fear for those of us who live in northwestern Ontario.

You have just now acknowledged responsibility for manpower planning and access to services in this province, so I have to ask you, what will you, as Minister of Health, do today to reassure the people in northwestern Ontario and the members of this House that this situation is being treated as the highest priority by your ministry?

Hon Mr Wilson: It's an important question. I'm aware of the press conference they had this morning, and I'm aware of the shortage and have been for a number of weeks now, particularly of orthopaedic surgeons, in Thunder Bay.

Thunder Bay is currently designated as an underserviced program area for two orthopaedic surgeons. If that community is able to find orthopaedic surgeons on a worldwide search I will not hesitate, under Bill 50 and the tools I have available today, to sign a Bill 50 exemption, provided that physician coming into that community qualifies as a physician in the province of Ontario from the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

I signed a whole pile more of Bill 50s this week and I'm doing it every week that I'm in office. With the discussions we're having with the OMA right now and the urgency of the situation, it has become clear to me that the government of Ontario, like many other provinces, needs more tools than simply Bill 50 and underserviced area programs to address this problem.

We are having those discussions with our partners, the physicians of this province, and I know we'll come to a solution in the very near future.

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Mr Gravelle: I think we all acknowledge there's no service more important than trauma care. Simply put, people can die without trauma care. Again, this is the

only trauma care service for a vast part of our province. As you acknowledge, you knew about this crisis for some time, so I just simply have to ask you once again, will you guarantee, Minister, that the people served by the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital will have access to trauma care?

Hon Mr Wilson: So that we don't unnecessarily upset people any more than they already are, I'm sure, over this situation, it is a situation this government inherited. Some member heckled, "It's been going on for a number of years," and it's true. I think this government is close to finding a solution in partnership with the physicians of this province, and I'll know that in the next very short period of time, whether we can find a mutual, agreeable solution to this.

There are tools available to governments in other provinces that this province does not have right now, and we're discussing that with the people at the Ontario Medical Association, whom we have to discuss with because the previous government made them the union for the doctors. I'm obligated under the law of two agreements signed by this government to have those discussions, and that's why I'm doing that.

But I'm also going beyond that and talking to frontline physicians and getting their ideas on how this can be solved. We know the Scott report is an important component, and we've committed fully to moving on that, along with some other measures that we're talking about with the Ontario Medical Association.

The Speaker: Would you wrap up your answer.

Hon Mr Wilson: Again, to ensure that the anxiety levels in Thunder Bay don't go through the roof, the hospital is providing trauma services and does have a plan in place if they hit overload and will be able to handle the patients in Thunder Bay. However, they do need our help. I'll expect the cooperation of all parties when we, together with the Ontario Medical Association, move forward to bring solutions to this very serious problem.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, you will know that in your anti-worker Bill 7 one of the worker's rights that you are retracting is the employee wage protection program. You will also know that it was reported in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record that you had sent a letter to employees of the bankrupt Epton Industries Inc in your home area that they would have the benefit of the full coverage as provided under the existing legislation up to the \$5,000.

I would expect, Minister, that you were rather pleased and relieved that you could let people in your own community know that they would benefit to the full amount that's currently in the law. My question to you is, if it's good enough for the employees in your own home area, why is it not good enough for all the workers of the province of Ontario?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): As the member knows, the changes that were made to the employee wage protection program are such that the cap

was lowered from \$5,000 to \$2,000. Those employees who qualified prior to the change will get the \$5,000, and those after will get, obviously, the \$2,000. You also know that there are only two provinces in all of Canada that have anything similar, and that's in Manitoba, where the cap is \$1,200, and the other one is in Quebec, where it's paid for by the employers. So employees in this province are still very, very fortunate. They are still entitled to \$2,000.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, it is so difficult for people to accept the fact that, instead of being proud of the fact that we have some of the best protection for workers in Ontario, you're proud that you're taking them away and gutting provisions that workers have earned and deserved for decades in this province.

In light of this particular program, the implication for more strikes than necessary as a result of changes you're making, the fact that you're taking away rights that have been in law for decades under all governments, the fact that you did not talk about the vast majority of the issues that you're dealing with in this bill during the election should tell you that people are entitled to an opportunity to have input into this—and the fact that I suspect you know you're going to have to make changes.

I'm asking you again, on behalf of our party, why will you not provide Ontarians with the same opportunity they had under Bill 40 to have input into this draconian law before you change the fundamental rules of labour relations in this province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: First of all, I think we need to make it abundantly clear that our Bill 7 does enhance the rights of the individual workers, rights that you took away with Bill 40, and we are putting into the workplace democracy measures.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): My question is to the Chairman of Management Board. Minister, can you update the House on the government's plans for privatization and contracting out?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I appreciate the question from the member for Mississauga South because the member for Mississauga South has worked with public servants over many years, as I have, through the municipal sector and through the provincial sector, and I'm sure she shares my view that public servants are hardworking and provide a great deal of services to the people of the province of Ontario.

The member for Mississauga South is also aware, as are all the members of this House, that we are spending \$10 billion more than we have.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Every year.

Hon David Johnson: Every year; each and every year. Clearly, government is too big.

This government has committed to looking to ways to restructure government, to reduce expenditures, to do business differently within the government, because to have the ability to provide the services for the people in

the future, we must restructure government. Privatization is a part of that overall plan.

Mrs Marland: Minister, I hope that when this process begins, you will guarantee to this House that it will be a fair process and that there will be no fire sale. We want to be assured that there will be no fire sale that will take place for the friends of the government.

Hon David Johnson: I can assure the member for Mississauga South that we are looking very carefully and very thoroughly at a process that will be fair. Certainly we do not intend to have a fire sale. Specifically, we're looking at either a system that might be centralized—and the Ministry of Finance and Management Board Secretariat are jointly studying a process for privatization, for contracting out—or possibly the process could be decentralized, relying on the various ministries to come forward.

Whatever procedure we choose is being thoroughly studied over the next few months. I would expect in the new year there would be a process that would be announced in this House involving contracting out, privatization, procurement procedures and all other facets to bring the spending of this government in line with revenues.

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SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. There were reports this morning, which you have denied, that suggest that a review is taking place within your ministry that would in effect mean the dismantlement of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the shifting of those services to other ministries or to the municipalities across this province.

Mr Minister, there is a memo from your deputy minister that goes on to blame the media for this report, but also goes on to say, "I want to assure you that the questions of delivery and staffing have not been decided." There was absolutely no reference to denying the fact that this review is taking place, that Mr Rabeau has been moved from Consumer and Commercial Relations to Comsoc to undertake this.

Mr Minister, a simple question for you: Can you tell the House what Mr Rabeau's job entails and promise and guarantee the House today that you have no plans to dismantle or shift any aspect of your ministry and that there's no ongoing review as to the shifting and dealing with the services you currently provide? Can you give us that ironclad guarantee today?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I suppose for a change I'd like to thank the member for the question. First of all, Mr Rabeau is purely in a policy area. That's question number one of your first series of questions.

Secondly, I think what we have to look at here, frankly—and I appreciate this. The real issue here is that we are in the middle of creating a new model of welfare here. We're not tinkering or monkeying around with the system, as has been done over the last 10 years. What we're doing right now is we're creating—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: We've gone through two phases. The first phase obviously is we're creating the foundation for the transformation of this system from self-dependency, and we've done this through the reduction of rates to 10% above the average of the other provinces and through the fraud and the eligibility provisions.

The next phase will be to build in the incentives to get people fully back in the workplace. This speaks to mandatory workfare and our learnfare programs. Really, I'm shocked that the member can stand up with such self-righteousness when he forgets that in the combination of the last 10 years we have spent \$40 billion—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The question has been answered. Just take your seat for a minute, please.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): We have a former member in the west gallery by the name of Margaret Harrington, from Niagara Falls. Welcome.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): We also have a former member by the name of Ross McClellan.

The Speaker: I believe he's on the payroll.

I would like to inform the members of this Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today Mr Samarasundara, official languages commissioner for Sri Lanka. Welcome to our guests.

ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Briefly, on a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: At noon today I had the opportunity to walk from the west door of this building over to and through the University of Toronto. This concerns—

Mr Bob Rae (York South): You're not going to get my job, Sean.

Mr Conway: No. I must say, I heard the salary that was being paid to the former Premier, and I could get interested if such were offered to me.

But seriously, on the matter of security, and this is a follow-up to several concerns that have been raised by members on all sides, today at approximately 12:15, I left the west door of the Legislative Building and walked on a western diagonal through the University of Toronto and I was really struck by what I encountered.

Like many members, I was aware that there was a demonstration planned for the front lawns of the building today, I think at some point late this morning, at the noonhour. But at about 12:15 or 12:30, I was struck when I entered the grounds of the University of Toronto to encounter as much of a police presence as I met. On Hart House Circle I counted eight—

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): These guys have a bunker mentality.

Mr Conway: Well, I think it's a matter—and I have a question that I want to direct at the end of this. I've been here over 20 years and I'm seeing things I have never seen before. I appreciate the concern that all

members have about valid and legitimate security pressures and problems. Let me be clear about that. But when I walked over through Hart House Circle and saw, I think I counted, eight or 10 mounted police, police vehicles, ambulance vehicles lining very substantial parts of the university grounds, I made some inquiries and I was told what I was told, that this was in anticipation of some difficulty perhaps at the Legislative Building.

Then I walked further and I got up on to Harbord Street between Avenue Road and St George and I encountered yet more—several motorized police vehicles, quite a number of ambulances—and I wondered, and I ask this question: What is going on? For example, have we got an agreement with the University of Toronto to use its grounds as a staging area for days on which there are demonstrations? I'd like to know the answer to that.

Is anybody calculating the cost? I counted a half—*Interjections*.

Mr Conway: Well, I'm asking the Speaker, because I have asked these public servants today what they were doing and they said they were on standby for potential problems down at the legislative grounds.

I just want to know, not necessarily today but through your direction at the Legislative Assembly committee, have we got an arrangement now with the University of Toronto to use its grounds as a staging area on any occasion when there is likely to be a demonstration here at Queen's Park? Is anybody calculating the ongoing costs of the kind of ambulance and police presence that I saw?

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Would the member take his seat, please. That is why I'm interested in having the committees meet and the legislative committee meet. I want to get some input into the security and the whole aspect of what's happening around here, and in order to do that, I would like to have these presented to the committee. But I'm glad to hear your views and I'll report back.

The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): It's Windsor-Walkerville—you've got me confused now—Windsor-Riverside, Mr Speaker.

I want, on behalf of my caucus, to share similar concerns. Every day now that there is talk that there's going to be a demonstration—it doesn't matter the size of the demonstration. Today I went out for lunch and I came back and all the doors to the assembly were locked. You can't get in the building. They did let me in today, and that's an improvement. But the first thing that happens, doesn't matter what the demonstration is, "There's a demonstration here so lock the building," whether it provides inconvenience for staff or inconvenience for other people who have business in this place. There's an immediate reaction.

I understand the process that you put in place, Mr Speaker, but there is something that can be done immediately. You don't need to wait only for the Legislative Assembly committee. I think you should convene a meeting of the three House leaders with yourself so that we can get an explanation from you as to what is going

on and what the rules are. I think that needs to happen as quickly as possible.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Routine motions.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I would like to request permission for unanimous consent to move to motions to strike the committees for this session of the Legislative Assembly for the province of Ontario. These committee memberships were submitted by all three parties and agreed to, as was the committee schedule. I understand that in my absence in the last week and a half this has been tried on a couple of occasions but not been successful. I do want to impress upon the honourable members that if this request for unanimous consent is not granted, there will not be opportunity to send Bill 7 to committee. Now, do I have unanimous consent?

The Speaker: We have had a request for unanimous—

Interjections.

Mr Rae: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If, on every motion that's made by the government on a routine basis, the ministers are allowed to make partisan speeches on behalf of their own motions, then I say to you, sir, if you're prepared to let him have it, then if it's sauce for the goose, it's sauce for the rest of us. I expect you to enforce the rules.

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent? *Interjections*.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): There being no unanimous consent, I move that the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Mr Eves moves that the House proceed to orders of the day.

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1510 to 1540.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): All those in favour of Mr Eve's motion will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 62, the nays 31.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move government notice of motion number 2:

That, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order of the House relating to Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour

relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations, when Bill 7 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and at such time, the bill shall be referred to committee of the whole House;

That two hours shall be allotted to consideration of the bill in committee of the whole House. At the end of that time, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved and the Chair of the committee of the whole House shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House. Any divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put, the members called in once and all deferred divisions taken in succession.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Ernie, you would never have accepted this, ever. It's shameful, absolutely shameful.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Put the jackboots on, Ernie.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order.

Hon Mr Eves: All amendments proposed to the bill shall be filed with the Clerk—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Minister. Order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Please, order.

Mr Bisson: I remember your speeches in opposition.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): You would have been yelling and screaming in this place, Ernie. All you have to do is try negotiation.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Cochrane South, the member for Windsor-Riverside. Order. Minister

Hon Mr Eves: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

All amendments proposed to the bill shall be filed with the Clerk of the Assembly by 2 pm on the sessional day on which the bill is considered in committee of the whole House.

That upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendments and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That consideration of the third reading stage of the bill be completed on the same day that it is reported from committee of the whole House and that notwithstanding standing order 9(a) the House be authorized to meet beyond its normal adjournment time until completion of the third reading stage of Bill 7;

That two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At the end of that time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment—

Interjections: Shame, shame, shame.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker: Minister. Order. Sergeant at Arms, would you please remove that person.

Interjections: Shame, shame, shame.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Please remove this man. Please remove the stranger.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Order. I'd like to remind the people in the gallery that you are prevented from making any sounds—

Mr Bisson: Remind the House leader there is a democracy in this province.

The Acting Speaker: —and if you do so I'll have to ask you to leave the House.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): These are the people they won't listen to. These are the people they are afraid of.

Mr Bisson: They are not listening to the people. This is not a democracy.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Cochrane South, I would ask you please to refrain from heckling. The member for—

Mr Kormos: They will not listen to the members of this province.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): We are losing our rights, Mr Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Welland-Thorold, that's sufficient. That's enough. The member for Nipigon, that's enough. Please. Order, please.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Point of order? Do you have a point of order?

Mr Eves.

Hon Mr Eves: That in the case of any divisions relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes and no deferral of any division pursuant to standing order 28(g) shall be permitted.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Eves has moved government notice of motion number 2. Mr Eves.

Interjections.

Mr Kormos: Blue suits are all that counts.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Order. We just can't proceed that way.

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: This is terrible.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Order. The member for Welland-Thorold, the member for Nipigon, I would ask you please to refrain.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Everybody has a right to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. The member for—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: This is the last time that I advise you to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Please. Order. I have all the patience in the world.

Mr Bisson: It is shameful.

The Acting Speaker: Please. The member for Cochrane South, please.

Minister?

Hon Mr Eves: Mr Speaker, the members of the Legislature will be fully aware, in both opposition parties, that an offer was made to both opposition House leaders earlier today—

Interjections.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I plead with you to start naming the members who are causing the disruption in this place.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Order. Please. The member for Nipigon, the member for Welland-Thorold, I ask for your cooperation, please.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: On a point of order? Is it a point of order? Take your seat. I have all the patience in the world and I know that you will leave the floor to the minister. These are the procedures—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. The member for Nipigon.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Welland-Thorold, the member for Nipigon. I understand it is a difficult issue. At the same time we have to debate it.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order.

I'll make you smile. I heard once a story that when you are about to lose your patience you say, "God, grant me patience immediately." So I ask you please, please, please, just keep quiet.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Please. I ask for your cooperation and I know you'll give me your cooperation.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Minister.

Hon Mr Eves: Mr Speaker, as I started to indicate, both opposition House leaders were advised earlier today that sending the bill to committee, which the NDP refused to permit to be done by refusing to approve a motion to even establish any committees, let alone this committee, to hold public hearings, they, in effect, have

left the government with absolutely no alternative. They would have had 11 hours a day, 44 hours of debate of public hearings. The time allocated for the resources development committee would be the equivalent to almost nine weeks.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: The House will recess for 10 minutes.

The House recessed from 1554 to 1604.

The Acting Speaker: Minister?

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Ernie, haven't you had enough to say already?

Hon Mr Eves: As I was—no, I haven't made any remarks at all with respect to the motion. It's important to note that the Liberal Party of Ontario was quite willing to accept an offer that would have sent this bill out for public hearings. However, the New Democratic Party was not. As a matter of fact, the NDP was not even willing to allow the routine motion to establish committees for this session of the Legislature to be formed.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The House leader is asserting that this party does not want to allow this bill to go out to the public. That is not the truth. We want this bill to go out to the people of Ontario—

The Acting Speaker: This is not a point of order. You're wasting your time. You're wasting the time of the House. Minister.

Mr Laughren: Who is wasting the time? The House leader is—

Mr Cooke: We're not going to listen to this.

Hon Mr Eves: The very people who are objecting introduced similar time allocation motions no less than 20 times between April 1, 1991, and November 29, 1994—

Interjections: Sit down. Sit down. Sit down.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Order.

Interjections: Sit down. Sit down. Sit down.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I would ask you to refrain from heckling.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Cooke: You wouldn't have done it when you were on this side—no negotiations—you'd refuse.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Cochrane South, the member for Windsor-Riverside, order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, the member for Cochrane North. Minister.

Interjections: Sit down. Sit down. Sit down.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Order. The member for Lake Nipigon, take your seat.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. I will now recognize the official opposition.

1610

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I wish I did not have the opportunity to speak on this motion this afternoon by the government. I want to indicate that my colleagues and I in the Liberal caucus will be opposing this motion when it comes to a vote later in this day.

The motion which has been presented by the government House leader is one which severely restricts, in I think an unprecedented way, the amount of meaningful time that will be available for debate of a very important piece of legislation.

The legislation does not simply tinker with previous legislation which was passed by the government of Mr Rae but, rather, makes some significant and substantial changes, not only to the legislation, by revoking it, but also by making further changes to the Labour Relations Act, which we believe do not provide the kind of balance that the people in this province are looking for.

One of the speeches in which I became most impassioned in this House, and it may sound odd to say so, was one over the change to the rules of the House. I'm not going to revisit that in any significant way this afternoon, as some might wish me to do, but only to say that each one of us in this House has our role diminished whenever closure is applied to the House, regardless of whether it's applied by a Conservative, a Liberal or an NDP government.

Second, when rules are changed and threatened further rule changes are made, as I understand may be the case, what happens is that elected members have a less significant role to play. In fact, you will find out that if the people in the Premier's office had their way, you simply would have nothing to do. When I say "the Premier's office," I say that with a small-case p, not a capital-case P, in this case; not a particular Premier.

What you find in an elected democracy is that those who have most access to the government are those who are the unelected people, usually within the Prime Minister's office in a federal government situation and within a Premier's office in a provincial government situation.

This is why all members of the Legislature have a vested interest in the rules under which we govern this province. This is why some of your own members perhaps privately within the confines of your caucus have expressed some concern about the kind of motions coming forward.

Many of the newly elected members of the Legislature would find some of the tactics that have been employed by the New Democratic Party to be unacceptable tactics, except their members would tell you that on occasions when members of the Conservative Party and Liberal Party felt concerned about the actions of the previous government, the NDP government, many of the same actions were taken by those of us in opposition. There is a reason for that. The opposition already is severely restricted in the way it can influence legislation. The way

we can, in opposition, influence it is by slowing it down and allowing for maximum debate.

Governments are always eager to move forward. The Premier's office, the Premier, the cabinet are anxious, as I know the minister will be, to see this legislation implemented as quickly as possible. It means there's less fuss out there. It means there's less concern about demonstrations in front of your constituency offices. It means that perhaps the number of days when there will be demonstrations at this House would be rather limited. So there is that vested interest.

But I say to all members of this House, within the confines of your own caucus—because I do not expect members of the government to rise in this House to oppose this motion or to express publicly in any significant way opposition to this motion—I hope within the confines of your caucus you will look carefully at the rules that govern this House.

One thing I can say to the government members is that you will find there is not much interest in terms of the general public or in terms of the news media in the rules of the House or in motions of this kind. The only way there will be some interest is the fact that there was a demonstration today outside of the House, and inside the House by members of the New Democratic Party shouting down or attempting to shout down the government House leader. That will make news. That will be significant because it's, as we refer to it, a dust-up in this House.

But surely that shouldn't be necessary. What would be much better is a debate on the substance of the bill that is before us. What would be useful is to have hearings across the province.

Many of you, I know, many of us in this House who live outside the Metropolitan Toronto area have expressed the view that very often we feel left out. One of the reasons the previous government moved to have some of the government ministries move to various communities across the province was because of that feeling, that many municipalities felt they were disconnected from Toronto, from the huge complex called Queen's Park, from the apparatus that is here, governing the provincial government and ultimately the province of Ontario.

That's why on various occasions we have asked in opposition, or have acceded to in government, when I had the opportunity to be in government, to the request to have hearings across the province, so that the people of Niagara Falls or the people of Timmins or the people of Sault Ste Marie or Ottawa have the same opportunity to make representations to the government which was elected and to all members of the Legislature that those who reside in Toronto do. By having the hearings only in Toronto, that incurs considerable expense and inconvenience for those, and doesn't allow for the kind of regional publicity that's necessary.

When you have these hearings, the government I'm sure will ensure that there are people who are supportive of this legislation who will appear. The representatives of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, I assure you, will be prepared to appear in all of the communities, and other organizations that government members will

organize. That's the way the system works. The opposition will ensure that there are others who will express a point of view, and there are those who of their own volition want to come before a committee of the Legislature to make their view known. This particular motion restricts that severely.

I understand the concern and the annoyance of the government at some of the tactics it has seen over the last few days on the part of the third party. The third party I'm sure felt that same annoyance when members of the Conservative Party—the leader, I recall very well, in this House read a bill which contained every lake in the province of Ontario. Some of the bills that were introduced by the New Democratic Party were in fact, I understand, exactly the bills which were introduced by the Conservative Party.

This is a matter of great concern to the opposition, and the New Democratic Party, as the government that brought in the previous legislation that the governing side is going to remove, is going to have a special concern about the fact that you're going to dismantle and disregard that legislation that they implemented with a good deal of discussion, with the many hearings they allowed across the province. I know there were many who were concerned that despite all the hearings, there weren't the kind of changes made to the legislation that some felt there should have been. Nevertheless, there was that opportunity right across Ontario to have that kind of input.

I think that's healthy for democracy, and I think you will find that allows people to believe, with justification, that they have at least had their day in court, that at least the members of the Legislature and, through the members of the Legislature and the committee process, the news media have had the opportunity to hear the arguments made on both sides. And they're always hopeful—and where there is life there is hope—that somehow governments might just change their mind, accept some of the amendments the opposition might propose or some of the suggestions that might come from the public.

This may be hard for some of you to believe, but not all the wisdom in this province resides in this Legislature, and it doesn't reside in Metropolitan Toronto. It actually resides in the people of this province. They come to all of us as individual members and suggest changes to legislation or new policies that might be valuable. Some of them can't be implemented. They may be impractical. There may be very good reasons why they can't be implemented. But they wish you to at least listen to their ideas, discount them if you will, after due consideration, but at least they have been heard, and once in a while we may see some changes.

That's why it's important that we have these kinds of hearings. That's why we've had this disruption in the House of the regular proceedings over the last several days, because there's a very strong feeling that this is necessary.

We in the Liberal Party will be opposing the legislation which deals with getting rid of all of the aspects of Bill 40. We had suggested that there may be a need for amendments, particularly to sections that may have some detrimental effect on business operations of this province. The New Democratic Party has a different view. They think that virtually everything you have done in this legislation is detrimental. We believe a lot of it is not going to be helpful to labour peace and fairness and balance in this province.

1620

Mr Laughren: Tories don't want labour peace. You guys don't want labour peace.

Mr Bradley: That's why we oppose this legislation, because we happen to believe—

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): You people are over there for a good reason. We won the election.

Mr Laughren: Oh, that's so arrogant, Wilson. You won the election, so you can do whatever you want. That's your view. It's arrogance.

The Acting Speaker: Order, the member for Nickel Belt.

Mr Laughren: Right. Because they won the election, they can do whatever they want to the electorate. That's the arrogance of the Tories.

The Acting Speaker: Order, the member for Nickel Belt.

Mr Laughren: You didn't win every seat, Jim. I know that would make you happy.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nickel Belt, order, please.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): It's the Minister of Health who keeps interrupting everybody.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Cochrane North, order.

Mr Bradley: The intervention by the Health minister does remind me of a problem that happens with governments; again, it happens with all governments, some worse than others. There's an inclination to say in these circumstances—and I've heard it many times, and I must confess probably somebody in the Liberal Party said it at one time or other; the old idea that, "That's why we're here and that's why you're there."

Sometimes that's true and sometimes it's not. But when you lecture the opposition and say, "You people are over there for a good reason; it's because the people agree with everything we're going to do," I don't think that's necessarily true. They may have agreed with the general thrust of your party; I think 45% of the people voted for the Progressive Conservative Party. You are entitled to the right to govern this province, and you will do so. That is the way the system works.

There may be some who say, "Isn't it awful; 55% didn't like them," but I don't remember saying before the election that if I didn't get 51% as a Liberal I would not be prepared to accept my seat in the Legislative Assembly or that we wouldn't be the government. I didn't want to see that happen. But I think it's important to know that in a democracy the opposition has its point of view to put forward.

This is not tinkering with legislation. When I think of the days of William Davis and the kind of legislation that was brought forward—and I know today in the Conserva-

tive Party, particularly among the YPCs in this province, Mr Davis isn't always held in as high regard as he might be with many of the long-time Conservatives in this province who remember that he did bring forward some progressive legislation.

You will remember, for instance, that Mr Davis's government—I stand to be corrected, but I'm quite certain this is the case—brought forward legislation which prevented what we called professional strikebreaking firms from operating in this province. There were actually firms that had, for want of a better word, some thugs or pretty strong people who really helped people to cross picket lines where there was a legitimate strike taking place in the province.

If you know people who work in an industrialized setting or any other setting where it is unionized or perhaps even where it's not unionized but they have decided to go on strike, what you will understand is that one of the things they resent the most is someone else coming in and taking their job away.

I come from, I guess you'd call it, a working class background, for want of a better description. My father, for instance, worked in industry all the time. He was not a foreman or anything of that nature but worked in industry all the time. I wouldn't call him a militant union person, but he was involved in strikes because these happen from time to time, and I'm sure his greatest resentment would be somebody crossing the picket line where there was a legitimate strike taking place, crossing the picket line and taking that job away. You have to understand, that's something people feel strongly about in this province.

I can understand, from your point of view and with the mandate you have, that the Minister of Labour wants to change things from what she perceives to be a balance in the opposite direction. I may not agree with that entirely, but I understand that she wishes to do that. But I think you have to understand as well that this bill goes far beyond what many people anticipated. Perhaps many of the people who voted for you in this election, for other reasons, may not have anticipated that you were going to go this far with this legislation, beyond renouncing and getting rid of Bill 40, but making other changes. They may agree with some of the changes that you have out there, but they disagree with others.

Mr Laughren: You didn't tell them you were going this far. You didn't say you were going beyond Bill 40. You misled the public. You misled people deliberately.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nickel Belt.

Mr Bradley: This is why, when they see this motion, if they knew the consequences of this motion I think they would be, as I am, adamantly opposed to it.

I understand that there are not committees to sit at this time. I'm sure that matter could be resolved with appropriate negotiations between the various parties represented in this House. Nevertheless, the government has decided to proceed with this particular choice.

There were in fact three motions provided. If I had been given the choice of which of the pills I had to take, hemlock, arsenic or—what is a third one we could say that isn't good for us?

1630

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): Strychnine.

Mr Bradley: Strychnine. If I could choose one of those three—and I appreciate the member for London Centre suggesting the third that I might take—if I had to choose from one of the three, I would not have chosen the particular motion that came forward. This was the choice of the government House leader as opposed to the choice I might have made in this case—not that I like seeing it at any time.

The House leader mentioned, as he must, that the former government had used closure on 20 different occasions. I'm sure the government of Mr Peterson, I recall, used closure on a few occasions as well. None of the motions, I should say to members of the House, was as drastic as this motion; none was as restrictive as this motion in the amount of debate that would be allowed for a major piece of legislation.

If you're wondering why you saw the demonstration you did from the members of the New Democratic Party today, as vociferous as they were, it would be first of all the legislation which you are trying to get through, and second, this particularly drastic method you are using.

It's difficult on the government side to be patient. I understand that. I watched some of the tactics. I saw members roll their eyes on the other side and so on. You notice often, though, that the members who have been here the longest and have watched this process several times are the ones who are usually the least exercised when they see the opposition utilizing the only tools they have at hand.

It's not because we in the opposition wish to be disruptive or cantankerous at all times, though you may gain that impression; we don't really wish to be that way at all. We wish to simply have our day in court and a day in court for the people who are represented by various parties in this Legislature today.

As I say, I can't recall a time when I was much more angry than I was when the changes were made by the previous government to the rules of the House. As I indicated, I don't want to get into that at any great length, because that's not the topic we're dealing with today. I only say that because I think it's important for those of us who are elected to have the most power. I'm not speaking of ego and I'm not speaking of power for power's sake. I simply think it's important that elected representatives, and not appointed people, have the most sway.

After all, we are the only people the electorate can get at. They can't get at the advisers to the Premier, they can't get at the advisers to the ministers, they can't get at the civil service easily, cannot get at anyone else who is not elected. But they are our employers, if you will. We are the ones they can come to and we are the ones they can potentially influence, because they're the ones who will decide whether we are re-elected to this House or whether we are rejected by the electorate. That's why it's important that we not give up that power and that responsibility to others.

The ramming through of the legislation in this way, as I would define it, tends to take away from that democracy

for which so many people fought. We will have Remembrance Day ceremonies on November 11, and again I don't want to stretch the point to a great extent, but a lot of people out there did serve in the armed forces to preserve the democracy in which we all believe. Some people in this House may believe that democracy is abused by some of the tactics that you see the opposition employ from time to time, and we may feel of course that it is abused by the tactics that the government uses.

I think it's incumbent upon all of us to ensure that, as much as possible, the parliamentary system works as the people out there would like it to work. What has happened today with this motion, the most draconian of the three motions that I see, is that in fact we're not going to do this. We're simply going to anger people even more.

There are people who are in the gallery today who are quite angry. We have people who are representatives of organizations, particularly the trade union movement, who are present in the gallery today who are obviously adamantly opposed. They are going to, I think with justification, feel that they have not been heard. They're going to, with justification, be able to go to their membership and say that the present administration wasn't prepared to entertain the briefs that they have to bring forward, the ideas, the opposition, if you will, that they have to bring forward, and many of their membership are going to agree with them. Perhaps not all but most of their membership is going to agree that there's just not a sense of fairness there with this particular motion.

One of the things that I mentioned in a previous debate about the rules of the House is that nobody is really interested in them except the members of the House and, even then, members of the House aren't absorbed in them. You can see by the press gallery today, there is no one sitting in the press gallery, although the members—

Mr Cooke: They're all watching on TV.

Mr Bradley: The members of the press gallery are watching on TV, on their television monitors, I'm assured by the House leader for the New Democratic Party.

But when you talk to those people individually about rules of the House and matters of that kind, they will tell you that their editors are simply not interested in those stories. So, though they're very important, the way the process of government works is exceedingly important to democracy, their editors aren't going to care. It's not a story that's going to have people who have television flickers riveted to the story for very long, except of course when there is a disruption in the House, as we saw this afternoon. There were cameras that came back to record it.

If a member is ejected from the Legislature, you will see the camera will follow the person out, because that is something that's different. If there's a different tactic used, a disruptive tactic of any kind used, you will see the news media are interested. Because good news is not news. Only something out of the ordinary, only bad news is news. We may not like that, but that is a fact of life.

Another way we make judgements, I think, on governments is, and it ties in with this point, what will the

government do when nobody is watching? Essentially, you're going to find that on rules themselves and on motions of this kind, in and of themselves, nobody in terms of the popular news media out there is going to listen very much unless there's a disruption. Yet I wish they would. I wish the public out there had an idea of how this House actually works and how it should work.

They, I think, would call upon those of us in the opposition to be responsible in the way we oppose legislation or deal with legislation in the House and committee and elsewhere, and they would hold accountable the government for the manner in which it deals with the legislation that it proposes.

You will find in this House when the legislation is not a significant change or not of great importance—we often call it routine legislation or housekeeping legislation—that there is cooperation all round. The bill goes through the House; there may even be special consideration given to three readings in one day. I have seen that kind of cooperation take place in the House, but it doesn't happen when motions of this kind come forward and it doesn't happen when those of us in opposition are extremely disruptive to proceedings in the House.

The best way to solve this is to have the leaders of the party and the House leaders and what we call the whips, who are people who are responsible for ensuring that all our members are here to vote—it's best when we can sit down and come to an accommodation or an agreement. The government may not like it, the opposition may not be entirely satisfied, but at least democracy works as it should. I think the people have much more respect for that than they do for the continuous wrangling that comes about in legislatures of this kind across the country and really around the world.

You'll notice out there that the public doesn't exactly rate political representatives at a very high level, and one of the reasons is that the only time they seem to see us is when there is a dust-up, as we refer to it, in this House, that much of the cooperation that takes place or can take place and much of the good debate that takes place is simply not news. It's simply not very riveting for either the representatives of the news media here or the public at large.

I am certain that if one were to do a Nielsen rating on what is happening in the House this afternoon, I would be the victim of many a television channel-changer at this time, because what I am talking about to most people is not exactly what you would call exciting, but it is extremely important.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): We're enthralled here.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): We're enthralled.

Mr Bradley: Some of my colleagues are enthralled. Not everyone would be.

I always ask the question, so where are the editorials, where are the columns, where's the coverage when we talk of rules of this House and procedures in this House? I've had the chance to serve on both sides, and even when I was in government, I thought the opposition had a very significant role to play. In fact I saw a positive

role that the opposition could play, and I see some of the members in this House today who have played that role in opposition as well as in government. I think that can happen, but it can only happen when there is cooperation between the parties who are represented in this House and among the parties, because there are in fact three parties.

"We had a mandate," the members of the government will say, "to implement this legislation." It was in what you refer to as the Common Sense Revolution. I have another name for it but I don't want to be provocative this afternoon. But you call it the Common Sense Revolution. It's a document that you were elected on. Well, if you think that all of the people in the province of Ontario read that document from cover to cover, they did not, and they did not read the Liberal or NDP literature from cover to cover either, and they would not be familiar with it. But I think most would want you to be fair with the opponents of this legislation.

The business community, by and large—not entirely, but by and large—will be supportive of this legislation, perhaps with some amendments that they feel would be useful. The trade union movement is going to be adamantly opposed to this legislation. In between are going to be people who are not perhaps directly affected by the legislation but who are observers who will say, "How can we achieve balance, how can we achieve fairness, and what method shall we use to achieve that?" Your government will be held in much greater esteem, I would contend, by fairminded people around the province if you were to allow for the hearings across the province in various communities.

I understand the debate cannot go on forever. The opposition may wish it to go on forever. I understand, as an elected representative, that the people out there don't intend a debate of this kind to go on forever and want an ultimate resolution of it.

The best legislation is that which is appropriately amended after hearing from various segments of the community. I don't think you're going to get the best legislation as a government if you don't have that kind of input. Some of it will not be helpful. Some will simply say you must toss the entire bill out, that you cannot make any changes. That's a legitimate point of view to make but it may not be as helpful as some who will come forward and say, "If you're going to make the changes—we don't think you should, but if you're going to make the changes—here's the way we believe you can best achieve what you want to achieve and still have some semblance of fairness and labour peace in this province."

You will notice that representatives of some of the larger trade unions have gone to their employers, the employers with whom they have a collective agreement, and have said to the employers that they have a vested interest in not seeing legislation of this kind passed.

Some people have characterized that as a threat. Others have simply said they are pointing out to their employers that the circumstances that exist on the shop floor, for instance, today may be reasonable circumstances for those companies and that a disruption through drastic changes in labour legislation may not be helpful to the

productivity within that company or to labour peace within the boundaries of that company, the property of that company.

It's interesting when, side by side, representatives of business and labour can make those kinds of points, and there again is where I believe that the public input is so valuable in legislation of this kind.

1640

I think governments have to use the tactic of closure sparingly. If I were to offer a suggestion, I would have offered a suggestion that the previous government of Mr Rae used closure more than I wanted to see it used. There are some occasions where I understood it was going to be used and I suppose, were I standing in the shoes of the government House leader of the day and had I been in the Premier's office as the Premier of this province, I would have understood why the government wanted to use closure after a lot of debate had taken place. But using it 20 times makes it a little easier for the next government to implement closure with some degree of satisfaction, with some degree of acquiescence.

I had assembled on short notice some of the speeches that were made by previous members, and I told the government House leader actually at our first meeting that one of the first questions I thought I would ask him in the House is whether he would today revoke the rules that the previous government had brought forward which changed the procedures of this House considerably. I have not had an opportunity to ask that question, but I would be interested in the answer.

Let me share with you what my friend from Parry Sound didn't have the time to share with you. In fact, he was probably going to say this in his speech but it was interrupted several times, so he didn't get a chance to say so. But on June 8, 1992, a very auspicious day in this House, the leader of the third party at that time, the Conservative Party, Mr Eves, the member for Parry Sound, rose on a point of order and said the following:

"I just want to express my concern as to the way the government and the government House leader are proceeding. There will be plenty of opportunity, I presume, with the current attitude of the government, to read into the record many speeches by the current-day Premier, the former Leader of the Opposition, and by the current-day government House leader, where they referred to, Mr Speaker—I am not using this term but I'm sure they have—Gestapo tactics of majority governments of years gone by of whatever political stripe.

"I just want to"—I'm still quoting the government House leader of the day because I thought his speech was so compelling, his point of order was so compelling on that day and one with which I was in great agreement. He said:

"I just want to impress upon the Legislature and the people of Ontario that what we see today is an abandonment of parliamentary democracy as we have known it in Ontario for the last 125 years and that now we're going to have government by imperial edict. There's a reason why this Legislature has performed as well and as cooperatively as it has for 125 years with the rules it has.

The Premier may laugh if he wants to at that suggestion, but I can tell him that before he was in this place there were House leaders like Elie Martel, Bob Nixon and Tom Wells who understood what compromise and negotiation and the art of parliamentary democracy were.

"Today we see that this government"—he's referring to the NDP government—"which supposedly has championed the cause of democratic principles—until it assumed power, that is—now believes that it should be able to govern by a stroke of the pen and by imperial edict. If that is the government's intention, as opposed to negotiating and observing rule changes and creating constructive rule changes—I note there's nothing in here that improves how the committee system works, which the government House leader has often said needs to be improved upon. There's nothing in here that gives more independence and power to individual members. I'm sure the member for Welland-Thorold would be very interested to know that his debate time will now be limited to 30 minutes.

"There's nothing in here that addresses any of those aspects of parliamentary reform. The only things in here are draconian measures so that the government can use its jackboots to walk over the Ontario citizens' and the people's rights and principles."

Members of this Legislature must often regret that we have Hansard, that we have a record of what people say in a very impassioned way under certain circumstances. But I shared the concern that the House leader then of the third party, the Conservative Party, expressed on that occasion and I would suggest to him that there may be members of the opposition who would use the same terms. In fact, some of the interjections I heard—we're not supposed to hear those at all—and some of the statements I heard from members of the New Democratic Party in particular used some of the same terminology.

So there was a suggestion that the government House leader made on that occasion, and that was that there be a conciliatory approach, an approach where three parties agree, as opposed to the other approach, which he describes in rather colourful language.

Well, he wasn't the only one. You may find this hard to believe, but the leader of the Conservative Party at that time in terms of being House leader, Mr Eves, my friend from Parry Sound, wasn't the only person. Believe it or not, it says "Mr Michael D. Harris (Nipissing)"—he is now the Premier of this province, but he was the leader of the Conservative Party—had a lot to say about it then.

Ms Martel: Read a bit.

Mr Bradley: I could read some of it, but I don't want to prolong too much of this, because then it gets into what Mr Cooke said at that time. So it's really a rather difficult time.

Mr Cooke: Actually, I think I was shouted down.

Mr Bradley: Well, he may have been shouted down. This is either a question or a statement from Mr Harris:

"Mr Premier, your government House leader has served notice that no legislation will go forward in this House until he passes rule changes. We're not opposed to discussing rule changes in this House or outside of the

House or in any forum which you would like to do it. But I find it a sad excuse for governing, when unemployment in this province is at its highest level in nine years. I wonder if the Premier would tell me this: How many jobs will be created in the province as a result of this urgent and important discussion on rule changes?"

Now, the point I get to in this is he saw the need as well for discussion between members of the three parties about rule changes, and one of the rule changes we're seeing this afternoon by simply decree of the government is a rule change in the way we deal with closure.

I did not like the previous rule changes because they did three or four things I was opposed to. In fact, I remember petitions being read in this House—they came in from my constituents—about the government rule changes at the time.

Mr Cooke: Oh, yes, yes, I remember those.

Mr Bradley: The now House leader of the third party will know they were very good suggestions. But it dealt with the following: It was the length of time one has to debate. And how that relates to this motion is that this motion restricts the amount of time one has to debate.

Today in this House, all members, regardless of how important the legislation might be or the issue at hand might be, except the lead speaker are restricted to 30 minutes. Now, there are some subjects with which I have dealt that could be dealt with in two or three minutes quite easily, and that rule doesn't affect it, but there are also matters that require very extensive debate and a rather lengthy address to the House, and yet the rules restrict members today to only 30 minutes.

This motion that is presented by the government House leader now provides a further restriction for members of the House, because now not only can we not speak beyond 30 minutes, but we are now limited in any speeches at all in terms of the amount of time that is left, when we divide that time among members of the assembly who may be interested in speaking on the subject.

Also, there is a situation that existed where ministers were empowered to determine unilaterally the amount of time to be allocated to debate the bills they initiate. Again, a better method would have been, either between the House leaders or House leaders and the opposition critics and the minister, to sit down and set forward a period of time for debate of any legislation. The change to that rule now allows the minister, almost by himself or herself, to make that determination.

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Third, the number of days the Legislature is in session was another matter. I always thought—as an opposition member you always believe this—that the House should sit many, many days, should sit at least the calendar days which are accounted for in an agreed-to parliamentary calendar. The previous government, for whatever reason it chose, chose not to sit very often; and I noticed that despite the fact that immediately after the election the present Premier of the province suggested the House should come immediately back to deal with important legislation and matters of policy, in fact the government did not meet until late September.

I was under the impression that was going to happen. In the back of my mind, I kind of thought that one of the non-elected observers and advisers to the Premier would say: "You can't possibly do this. You cannot be prepared. We can do all of these things without the Legislature knowing or without the Legislature consenting, so why bother to call it back into action? Why call it into session? Why bother with all those people who were just elected? We will just do what we see fit with as many items as we can before calling the Legislature back." Again, while the opposition has a vested interest in the Legislature sitting, I suggest that diminishes the power and responsibility and duties of all members of this House, including those who are not in the cabinet and are members of the governing party.

The Speaker had his role diminished, because that person did not have the power to determine the question of whether debate has been sufficient on any matter before the House. There used to be, in other words, some considerable discretion so the Speaker, who is independent, and now independently elected—that began in 1990 when Mr Rae said that the Speaker, in his view, should be elected. The federal House of Commons has the same situation.

Mr Cooke: Actually, you brought that rule change in.

Mr Bradley: Who did?

Mr Cooke: You brought the rule change in.

Mr Bradley: Thank you very much. I get credit, or at least our party gets credit, for that rule change. But at least the subsequent government to ours was prepared to see an elected Speaker, and I see this government carried on. I like that idea of having the Speaker elected by all members of the assembly.

I was concerned, when those rule changes were put through, that in fact the Speaker would have a diminished role, would not have the discretion the person sitting in the chair once had to determine whether there had been sufficient debate.

That used to annoy governments from time to time, because often the Speaker—almost always the Speaker—was from the governing party. You would see the dagger looks from the Premier and other members on the front bench when the Speaker would say, "I don't believe there has been sufficient time for debate and I believe we should continue for several more hours."

But the Speaker was independent. While the government may have been annoyed and the opposition pleased with that decision, ultimately I think the government benefited from that additional debate. There was the opportunity at least, as I say, for members to have their day in court.

The last thing that I mention is something that I mentioned previously in my address this afternoon, and that is the power being shifted everywhere from the elected representatives to appointed people. The opposition from time to time will, and it's not very parliamentary to do so, make a noise like a seal, because they like to suggest that government members outside of the cabinet are trained seals. They gesture as though they're throwing fish to people who are applauding.

I understand that governments want unity and that you probably support most of what the government is doing. But I think it's important for rebellions to take place in the caucuses, or whatever the plural of "caucus" is. I didn't listen well enough to my Latin teacher, I suppose, at the time, Vince Dugo—I'll mention his name and then send this to him; and Mrs Flora King was also a Latin teacher of mine—I guess I didn't listen as well as I should have during Latin class, because I would know the plural of "caucus."

But within your own caucus, I urge members of the governing party, as a result of the motion that's put forward this afternoon, to question those who are in the cabinet. The job of the government backbencher isn't simply to applaud, isn't simply to get up and lob questions to ministers, such as, "Oh, Minister, how is it you're able to do such a good job?" I know that may be a compelling question that day, but I think you'll see as you go along that the members who are most respected are those members who, whether privately or publicly, call into question the policies of their own government, because again, we have the luxury, those of us who are elected, of listening to the people within our constituencies. We can be a sounding board for their concerns.

One of the concerns that I have seen expressed through many letters to me and through calls and personal conversations, has been about Bill 7 and the lack of opportunity for members of the public to be heard and to have sufficient debate on this legislation. They are people, by and large, who are going to oppose the legislation and perhaps have from the start, perhaps in some cases, no matter how you modify it, will not be supportive, but they are concerned that they are simply going to be discounted in this debate.

Many of them are not the people you think they are; they're not card-carrying members of the New Democratic Party who are simply echoing that. They may not even be within the executive structure of the trade union movement. These are rank-and-file members who see circumstances arising where their rights will be diminished by this legislation.

I understand it's tricky. I understand there has to be a balance out there. But there are many people who have finally achieved a collective agreement, have finally been able to form a union in areas where it's been difficult before to form a union and have been able to sit down with management and come to a reasonable collective agreement who will see that perhaps slipping away from them or that opportunity not being available to others. That is why they would be concerned about this motion that is before us today.

So I ask the government at all times to restrict its use of closure motions. I ask the members of the Legislature to examine—and I know you may have other things on your agenda—the various forms of closure that have been used over the years, the specific wording of each of the closure motions. Compare it to the motion that you see here this afternoon and I think you will agree, perhaps privately, but objectively, that this is a more drastic motion than any that we have seen put before this House previously.

To their credit, again the previous government provided a lot of input into their legislation. The final result was not pleasing to many of the people in the business community, but if you went to various communities in this province, you saw that the business community could make its views known. You saw representatives of the trade union movement make their representations; you saw individuals make representations. Now, whether those representations were heard in a manner that people thought was balanced and reasonable is a matter for the public to decide, but at least that opportunity was there.

What we're seeing today is that that opportunity is being taken away from people, and that's unusual in this province. In the time I've been in the House, Premier Davis and Premier Miller, Premier Peterson, Premier Rae, and now Premier Harris have been the leaders of the government. In many of these cases the leaders have been annoyed with the opposition when they were in government, but if you listen to each of them after, they will say that something positive came out of the process.

When I was Minister of the Environment I well remember how useful members of committee could be. Some of my colleagues in cabinet, and perhaps even the former Premier from time to time, may have been annoyed with what happened in committee. On a personal basis I may have been annoyed from time to time with some jibes which were directed at me, but I often felt that the suggestions that came from the committee, the pressure that came from the committee, from our own members in government and from the two opposition parties, that pressure was extremely helpful in improving legislation and environmental policy in this province, and I have said that on a number of occasions.

1700

One of the former critics in the field of environment, Mrs Marland, the member for Mississauga South, was always a tough critic, whether it was in committee or whether it was in the House. The questions that she directed to me were not always easy to handle—

Mrs Marland: But fair.

Mr Bradley: —and she describes them as fair; I let others make that judgement—but I want to tell you that the member for Mississauga South had an influence on the policy in this province under the government of David Peterson, when I was Minister of the Environment, because she had some suggestions that I thought were of benefit. She put the kind of pressure on at key times that enabled me to persuade my colleagues in cabinet that what I was trying to achieve could be best achieved if they were to agree to what I wanted and what was being suggested by the member for Mississauga South.

Now, there are other members of the House who are in similar positions here today. The member for Riverdale is here, and she's an environmentalist of some repute. She used to make some suggestions that some people said were completely off the wall, but I didn't say that. I said that she had something beneficial to say.

We would have some hearings and she would organize people from her community. I remember, as you will, Mr Speaker, when we dealt with the issue of contaminated soil in the Riverdale area, that one of the people who was extremely concerned about that was the present member for Riverdale. She had people come forward, whether through a committee process or another process, to make known those concerns so that the government would address them.

She, as an opposition member, put some pressure on; some of our own government members put pressure on. As a result we had a cleanup that took place there which is trying to be emulated in other places. Again I go to the member for Mississauga South, who suggested there were some problems of that kind potentially in her riding as well because they had some industrial operations which contained that kind of soil.

The point I'm making is simply that you benefit as a government, the people of this province benefit, when we don't employ this kind of motion but rather when we employ negotiation and conciliation between the three parties and when we allow the opportunity for a full and frank debate of the matters before us. I can't think of a member of the government who wouldn't want to speak on Bill 7. This resolution will prevent not only those of us in opposition but will prevent those of you in government, the people who are not in cabinet, from having the opportunity to speak on this legislation.

You may wish to totally endorse what the government has proposed, and that is fine—that is your responsibility if you wish, that's your choice if you wish—but this motion will deny you, as well as deny me, the opportunity to debate this legislation in as full and complete and comprehensive and frank a manner as perhaps all of us would like. So by punishing the opposition with a motion of this kind, the government is also punishing members of the Conservative Party who ran on the platform of changing Bill 40, of abolishing, getting rid of Bill 40.

My friend the member for St Catharines-Brock, who is in the House this afternoon, may well wish to make a compelling speech in this House on this issue. I would like to hear him. I'm sure his constituents would like to hear him. But he's not likely going to have the opportunity to be heard on this issue because the government House leader has issued a decree, an edict which says debate shall be severely restricted.

So my friend the member for St Catharines-Brock, my friend the member for Lincoln, who also represents part of the city of St Catharines, won't have the chance to make a speech on this, and I may not have a chance to address the substance of the legislation as I would like because of the restrictions. It is likely that only the critic of the party will have that opportunity.

Mr Kormos: And other critics.

Mr Bradley: And other critics. There are agricultural critics as well on this.

I guess the purpose of my address this afternoon is to try, in a very conciliatory way, a very reasonable way and a very moderate way, to convince the government to change, to withdraw this motion. I think if this motion were withdrawn, there would be an opportunity for the House leaders of the three parties to sit down and come forward with a reasonable agreement.

I cannot speak for the House leader for the New Democratic Party. He will have the chance to speak in this House in the very near future.

Mr Kormos: Starting this afternoon?

Mr Bradley: I want to assure him that he will have that opportunity to speak in this House this afternoon some time.

But if we saw a gesture of goodwill from the government, I would be convinced—let me put it this way: I would be very surprised if the Minister of Labour would not want considerable input in this legislation, because I well recall how she wanted so much input on Bill 40, and I agreed with her that there should be a full and frank discussion of the provisions and implications of Bill 40.

So when her legislation comes forward, I know, to be consistent and principled, that she must be saying in her heart of hearts, "I would love to see hearings in Moosonee and Geraldton and Timmins and Welland and other places in the province." I would say in her heart of hearts that is exactly what she wants, and that's why I ask her, as well as the others, to convince the government House leader.

By the way, the government House leader, in case you do not know, always acts on orders from the Premier's office. For "government House leader," you translate "Premier."

We used to be critical in opposition of Mr Cooke, the member for Windsor-Riverside, when he would bring something forth. There would be some rather personal and direct attacks on him as the architect of some draconian measures when really many people knew that the—

Mr Cooke: But you always blamed it on the Premier's office, and I appreciated that.

Mr Bradley: I was always the one who was prepared to say that the rule really comes down from the Premier's office and so I couldn't entirely blame Mr Cooke for it. He was complicit perhaps in some way, but it was the Premier's office ultimately who gave the orders when there had to be those 20 motions for closure.

But examine the motions, examine every one of the motions, of the government House leader under the Liberal Party. You will find none as drastic and as restrictive and as anti-democratic as the motion which has been presented here this afternoon.

Some of the early impressions of the government—and by the way, I want to go to a point. My friend had become exercised because he was being heckled, my friend the member for Parry Sound, but, you know, it's never wise to say, "That's why you're there and that's why we're on the other side," because, as the saying goes, what goes around comes around, or what comes around goes around. It's a circle.

Mr Cooke: What was the famous statement?

Mr Bradley: The famous statement was by Premier Davis. In 1975-77, we had a minority Parliament. By the way, it worked quite well. In 1977-81, we had a minority Parliament. Jack Stokes, the NDP member for Lake Nipigon, was the Speaker and a very fairminded person. You may say: "An NDP Speaker? Wouldn't he be

favouring the NDP?" I ask you only to phone Capreol, Ontario, and ask the former leader of that party in terms of the House leader responsibility, Elie Martel, whether he thought that Speaker was favouring the New Democratic Party. He was not.

I thought that Parliament worked well, but what happened was, the government was humble, as all governments are. You remember the Liberal government of 1985-87 was quite a humble government. It was one which really listened carefully to the opposition. Then that government received a mandate having 95 members. Did you see a perceptible change? There may have been. When you're on the inside, you see less of that. You're less objective. I would suggest to you that others may have said the government wasn't listening as well as when it was in a minority position. What happened was there was an election—awful election at that because it was so cold—in February and March of 1981.

Mr Laughren: March 19.

Mr Bradley: March 19 was the actual date, and I can remember how cold my hands were outside of the plant gates speaking to the workers as they were going into the plant and enlisting their support in that election which was forthcoming, thankfully, to the many people in my constituency. It was a very cold election.

1710

But what happened, the government came back in here, having been a fairly conciliatory government from 1975 to 1981, and the Premier of the day referred to "the realities of March 19" and you could see it start to deteriorate from there, because they were back in the driver's seat, not having to be accountable.

So the government thought it would buy a jet. I think Mr Harris was a member of that government. Yes, he was. They were going to buy a jet for the comfort and convenience of members of the cabinet and the Premier.

Mr Laughren: A special jet.

Mr Bradley: It was a Challenger jet, a very special jet, nicely appointed on the inside, and it was going to be, as I say, for the comfort and convenience of the Premier and members of the cabinet and other hangers-on who could make it into the jet, because the—what do we call it? Are they turboprops or what do we call the ones that—the King Air ones you have, the ones that the Ministry of Natural Resources has. The minister is here; he may help me. The planes that you have available to you.

Interjection: Turboprops.

Mr Bradley: Turboprops they are, I'm sure. Well, they weren't to be good enough for the government, once it had achieved re-election with a majority and reminded all of us in the opposition of the realities of March 19.

Then they decided they would buy an oil company. They said, "Oh well, you know, it's time to buy an oil company." I won't ask the members of the New Democratic Party to intervene in this because they often liked governments to buy oil companies. But no one expected—at least we would have expected the New Democratic Party to buy one, as we expected the New Democratic Party to nationalize Inco.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: And to bring in government auto insurance, as the member for Welland-Thorold prompted me to say on this occasion, because it was near and dear to his heart.

But the government had achieved this majority, and so we had Suncor being purchased, the oil company. We had Minaki Lodge being built and the heck with the rest of you people, whatever you think of it, and it's a great place.

Interjection: If you can find it.

Mr Bradley: If you can find it. And all the other things were happening that even some of the members of the back bench were concerned about.

I remember Larry Grossman in this House, and you know how Larry got into the cabinet? He got into the cabinet by being disruptive. He wasn't compliant. He didn't simply sit, as they did in those days before television, and pound on the desk. He instead was prepared to be publicly critical of the government when he felt it necessary.

Mr Kormos: It didn't work for me.

Mr Bradley: It didn't work for the member for Welland-Thorold, but then he was—he did get into cabinet eventually, but once he got into cabinet probably felt more comfortable being able to speak freely and, if not finding himself in agreement with everything the government was doing, was not always as compliant as premiers like people to be.

I can't recall whether he was fired or whether he left cabinet.

Mr Kormos: You were right the first time. I never quit.

Mr Bradley: He said he did not quit. He was fired then. I'm sorry.

Mr Kormos: It's better to be outside the tent.

Mr Bradley: He's mentioning being outside a tent. Okay, I understand that.

Mr Cooke: And that's something we all agreed on.

Mr Kormos: Except you were inside the tent and I was-

Mr Bradley: I am sorry that I am sowing the seeds of discontent among members of the New Democratic Party at this time. I would never want to do this ordinarily.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): You were being a bit provocative.

Mr Bradley: A bit provocative I'm being, yes. I don't know what side you were on, Madam Speaker, at that time when the member for Welland-Thorold was involved in many of these issues, but I think some people admired his independence on that occasion. I'm reluctant to say this because I'm told, if you read his political pamphlets, he takes out of the sentence, mid-sentence maybe, "dot, dot, dot," and then, "Jim Bradley says Peter Kormos is doing a good job." I am told that happened in a pamphlet, and I had to deny it thrice for the Liberal candidate in Welland-Thorold at the time because he did that.

So I will say that within the context of the New

Democratic Party he did a good job, within the context of the New Democratic Party.

Mr Kormos: It's still usable.

Mr Bradley: And he says it's still usable.

Mr Kormos: It's quotable. Thank you. I'll do it again in 1999.

Mr Bradley: Who knows? He may not run again. Something like that might happen.

But back to the motion and why this motion should not proceed. I have spoken at some length. Let me inform members of the Legislature why I've done so. I am giving the government House leader a chance to reconsider. I'm giving him a chance to huddle with his advisers, some who have come from the federal field, having worked with the Brian Mulroney government—I notice that's happening more and more—to provide advice to the provincial government. I want him to be able to discuss with them some other options, an option that doesn't involve this drastic motion coming before the House today, an option instead which will involve negotiation with the opposition parties.

Once that agreement has been reached, you have to understand that while the opposition may say, "The devil made us do it," nevertheless there's some responsibility we have at that time as well, having agreed to it. So the government wins all around when that happens. If you can't reach agreement, if you make another effort and it's impossible, then you will take whatever course of action you wish.

Perhaps you'll choose one of the other options. I liked Mr Sterling's option, if I had to take poison, which of the poisons I would take: Mr Sterling's poison probably provided for the most debate of anybody. Mr Sterling has been here since 1977, he has seen many of these changes, and it was more moderate than the others. I still didn't like it, but it was more moderate than the one that has been selected by the government House leader today, upon which this Legislature will be voting this afternoon.

The reason I'm also concerned that we be able to get on with this debate, with the substance of this debate, is that there are so many other issues that have to be canvassed and have to be dealt with by this House. If we are preoccupied, as some members have been, with disrupting proceedings, and preoccupied on the government's side by passing by certain proceedings, then the House isn't operating correctly.

Let me give an example. I'm sure all the members here have petitions which have been brought to them—I have some on my desk—petitions brought forward to them that we would like to present to the House, because people believe that when a petition is presented to the House their views are going to be heard. This is one dealing with, it says here, the Karla Homolka situation; I won't get into the details of the petition. But many of us have petitions that are forthcoming to us.

Every time one of the cabinet ministers, either the government House leader or acting government House leader, gets up to move that we go directly to orders of the day, when they go to the orders of the day that means none of you has a chance to present bills. There are a lot

of opposition people and government people who may have bills they wish to present to the House for consideration, and you don't have a chance to present your petitions. That's limited to 15 minutes, because I think it was the Conservative Party at one time that read petitions forever in the House—maybe the NDP, maybe the Liberals—but read petitions one after another, so the rule was changed to limit that to 15 minutes, which is probably reasonable when you think of it.

But we can't even read these petitions, so people are phoning and saying: "Why don't you read the petitions? Are you avoiding us? Are you not carrying out your responsibility as a member of the Legislature?" I have to say: "I'm sorry. I would love to do it, but the government House leader moves daily that we must get beyond petitions and to the business of the day that the governments wants. For that reason, we've not been able to do so." I would not be disruptive of the rules enough to read the petition into the record today. In respect of the rules and respect of the individual in the chair at this time I would not want to do that.

1720

That is what happens when we have a breakdown in the negotiations. I know that as I speak the government House leader is huddling—it won't be with elected members—with non-elected members, perhaps with the whip, who can be a very reasonable individual when he wants to be, the member for York Mills, who in opposition used to be rather fiery when matters were brought forward that were of concern to him.

So I implore the government, I implore the House leader if he is watching this on his television monitor and those who advise him, to correct your ways.

I want to give the New Democratic Party a chance to speak this afternoon because I know there's going to be a motion coming forward for a vote on this. There will be a vote at the end of the day unless the government changes its mind.

But in the name of democracy, recognizing that the rules had been changed by the previous government in what I consider to be a very detrimental way—I was surprised, because I always heard that Bob Rae was a person who believed strongly in parliamentary democracy, but that's past, and I don't want to dwell on that past. I know that the member for Windsor-Riverside is a person who also held the rules of this House in high esteem, and he was obviously forced to make those changes by members in the Premier's office.

I well remember the speeches. I could go into them, but I won't. But I could quote your present Premier, your House leader and others who gave impassioned speeches in this House against the restriction of debate and discussion of important legislation. I'll allow you simply to go to the Hansard. The Hansard is available in the library and in other places, and you will be able to read for yourself. You won't have to take my word that I'm quoting; you'll be able to read for yourself a bit about the history of this.

Despite the rules the NDP has saddled us with over the last five years, and the Ontario Federation of Labour

representative in the gallery—oh, there's Ross McClellan in the gallery as well. Ross McClellan is in the gallery as well, a former esteemed member of this Legislature and one who used to give advice from that side. That's the kind of person I'm appealing to: the Ross McClellan of the new government. Please inform the government House leader that he should change his mind on this motion.

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I've been asked by Mr Gord Wilson of the Ontario Federation of Labour to wrap up. He's given me the signal from the gallery that I should wrap up so that Mr Cooke, the member for Windsor-Riverside, can speak.

In conclusion, in the name of democracy, in the name of parliamentary procedure, in the name of acquiescence to the true realities of the province and in the name of common sense, I ask you to withdraw this motion.

Mr Cooke: I can assure you that I won't be speaking as long as the previous member, because I'm not a long-winded teacher. That's why I didn't mind having restrictions put on the amount of time, because it's important to have participation in this place. But I do want to make a few points on behalf of our caucus.

First of all, I think it's important that members on the government side understand why our caucus is so angry today about the process that has been followed to deal with Bill 7. It's got to be made very clear that there have been absolutely no negotiations offered by the government on how Bill 7 would be handled. We have had three or four House leaders' meetings. I can't remember the exact number, but three or four; every Thursday we meet. At every meeting we have had, I have raised the question about how this bill was going to be handled, put very clearly our request for public hearings across the province—the official opposition party has also supported that position—and every week we constantly got the same response from the government: "We're considering it. We're going to have some form of public hearings. We'll talk about it later."

Never once was a specific proposal put forward. Never once was there an offer by the acting government House leader, Mr Sterling, to sit down and negotiate. Never once was that put forward.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): You can do it right now.

Mr Cooke: The Minister of Labour says we could have done this.

Ms Martel: "Do it now," she said.

Mr Cooke: Well, I suggested this afternoon during question period, and the House leader for the official opposition has just said the same thing, that they withdraw the motion, stand down the motion, and ask the three government House leaders to negotiate a settlement of how this legislation's going to be handled.

Do you want the floor? You can act as government House leader. You can move the adjournment of the debate and we will go and negotiate. If that's what you'd like to do—Madam Speaker, I'd be glad to yield the floor to the Minister of Labour, if that's what she's putting forward. Is that your suggestion?

Hon Mrs Witmer: You have the floor.

Mr Cooke: I think that makes it absolutely clear. Use all the rhetoric, say what you have to say to the mikes, occasionally say it in the House, but when it comes to it, you aren't interested in public hearings on this bill. You want to ram this legislation through the House. You don't want public input from across the province and you want to shut this place down.

You've got your 82 members. As the House leader for the official opposition has said, this reminds all of us who have been here for a while of the way the Davis government operated after the March 19 election in 1981. You've got your majority. There is no democracy now; it's just going to be dictatorship—no negotiations.

One of the things that concerns us is that this is the first piece of legislation being debated that this government has brought forward, the first major piece—the first piece, period. This is going to be setting the process and the tone of how we're going to be dealing with legislation for the next four and a half, five years.

This is not something you can expect the opposition to agree with, and not just the opposition here but those who do not agree with your point of view across the province.

We know how you view workers in this province. We've seen those kinds of comments from the person who's now the whip for the government and we've seen comments from the current Minister of Labour when they were in opposition. They have no respect for organized labour and therefore they do not believe they need to listen to workers.

They've had their meetings with big business. Actually, it's not even big business. They've had their meetings with their small circle of business friends. They don't want to listen to companies like Nestlé, they don't want to listen to companies like Chrysler, who are saying, "Look, we may not have agreed with Bill 40, but we think what you're doing and the process you're following and the lack of consultation and the lack of involvement is dangerous."

It's not only an offence to the democratic process; it's dangerous in terms of job creation and investment and the labour relations atmosphere that's going to exist in this province. You're sowing the seeds for some very difficult times in this province.

When we were in government and we had legislation called Bill 40 out to committee, we had five weeks of public hearings, because the third party said they wanted to have extensive public hearings and they wanted those public hearings to occur across the province. I think they went to seven or eight communities outside of Metropolitan Toronto.

The first day the committee met, the current Minister of Labour raised a point of order in the committee, and I want to read the point of order. Ms Witmer stated:

"I'd just like to register the concern of the Ontario PC party regarding the starting date of August 4. Unfortunately, we had hoped to give people in this province sufficient time to prepare their presentations, and we're looking at a startup date one week later. Certainly, we're very concerned about the very short time that groups and

individuals are going to have for making their presentations."

What a hypocrite the minister now is. In this particular case, we've had five days in the Legislature to debate this bill. Two days have not counted towards the time allocation motion, one because, yes, we engaged in procedural activities to try to make the point to the government that we wanted to have public hearings across the province. The other day didn't count because the acting government House leader was trying to be such a smart aleck that he tried to move to the motion to establish the committees and that meant there was no day towards the time allocation motion. Five days to debate a bill that does represent the most significant changes in the Ontario Labour Relations Act in the history of the province, and many items in this bill were not discussed either during the Bill 40 hearings or during the recent provincial election.

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I think it is very dangerous and very wrong for this government to say, "There's no need for public hearings across the province on anything because we had an election and the election gave us a majority, and as a result we don't need to have public hearings because we said there were going to be changes to the Labour Relations Act." I suppose the government will take the same view on employment equity: "We don't need to have public hearings on employment equity across the province because we were given a mandate. We don't need to have public hearings on welfare reform because we were given a mandate."

There are actually good things that can happen when you have public hearings. There has not been a piece of legislation in the time that I've been a member of the Legislature where there have been public hearings where there haven't been amendments to the legislation as a result. And there will be amendments. You pick up problems in the legislation, you hear different points of view, and it will result in changes to your legislation. But if you shut out the public, whether it's drafting errors—and you've had a little bit of experience with drafting errors in the last few weeks—or whether there are actual problems in the legislation that require correction, you will pick that up with the experts who make their presentations and with people in our communities who want to make presentations to the committee.

Madam Speaker, I want to give you a couple of examples that I remember from the time that we were in government where public hearings had a very significant impact. I'm glad that Mr Tilson's here because he was involved certainly on the rent control legislation that came in. He will remember that even on the temporary rent control bill the Tory party demanded public hearings across the province. That was the temporary bill. They had several weeks of public hearings across the province, and the member will remember that there were significant amendments that were brought in as a result of that. Significant amendments were brought in. You know in particular the amendment that had a cap on certain rent increases that you claimed was retroactive, where we lifted that cap. That was a major amendment.

There's another example. When the legislation came into the House for market value assessment for Metropolitan Toronto, you'll remember the whole process that Metropolitan Toronto council went through in Toronto. They came forward with their proposal. They needed enabling legislation in the Legislature. We brought that enabling legislation in. The Conservative Party again insisted on public hearings, even though in that case there was a very good case that could be made that there was no need for public hearings because Metropolitan Toronto council had had a lot of public hearings.

We accepted the recommendation from the Tories. We had public hearings. We went on for hours and hours and hours of public hearings, and in the end there were presentations that were made that showed that the Metropolitan Toronto proposal was flawed. The bill was dropped and market value assessment did not come in to Toronto, not that proposal, because it was wrong, it wasn't going to work.

The public hearings can work, and they will show even a government that thinks it knows everything—even a government like that can learn something from public hearings.

I want to come back to—because I think it's important, I would dare say that there are a lot of members of the Conservative caucus who haven't even read the time allocation motion that's been called. Let's remember what this thing says.

Three days, as I said. We've had three full days of second reading. That's what we've had up to this point. We've had, as I said, two days that were ruined, one because of some procedural matters that we pursued and another because the acting government House leader made a procedural mistake. So we've had three full days. Now we've got the time allocation motion that will be debated today. This will be passed today, unless the government reconsiders. Then the result will be that there'll be no standing committee hearings at all. The bill will go to the committee of the whole, and that's where amendments will be looked at for a couple of hours, and then we'll get two hours of third reading. So when this motion passes today, the only thing that is left is four hours more and then the most significant changes in the history of the Ontario Labour Relations Act go into effect.

Why did we not accept the other alternative that the government put forward of saying that there could be four days of public hearings next week, starting on Monday? Well, I go back to the quote from the current Minister of Labour when she was the Labour critic: "We would have between today and next Monday where presentations would have to be put together. All of the presenters would have to be organized, and that would be it." They would have—what?—four days in order to get their presentations together.

If the government was interested in real public hearings, they would say, "The bill will be referred out, we'll start public hearings and we'll have public hearings across the province." I know that the government is saying, "Well, we want the bill passed by Christmas." There's nothing magical about Christmas. There's nothing

magical that says we have to have the legislation passed by Christmas, other than the fact that the government said it wants it passed by Christmas. They want to ram the legislation through.

Normally what would happen is that we could start public hearings now in the resources development committee, we could go through a lot of presentations from organizations that are based in Metropolitan Toronto—local unions, other businesses, members of the communities that want to come forward—and we could start those hearings now. The committee could then adjourn and we could have public hearings in January. The law would become the law after there is clause-by-clause consideration in March or April at the latest. So we're talking about a difference of about 16, 17, 18 weeks before the legislation would be passed.

We know and the government knows that the real reason they don't want public hearings across the province is that there is a lot of public opposition to this legislation. They don't want to have hearings in Windsor because if they go to Windsor, they're going to have to listen to plant after plant in Local 195, CAW, which is an amalgamated local—it has all of the auto parts companies in the Windsor area in that particular local, plant after plant where they will be severely impacted by the elimination of certain sections of Bill 40 which did not allow scabs in Ontario's plants when there's a legal strike.

Those are the plants that are going to be hit, those are the workers who are going to be hit: in the auto parts sector, in small plants where there's a lot of new Canadian workers who had been exploited over the years, which now under the legislation that's in place have been able to get unions in representing the workers and making sure that their rights are respected.

But you know that if you go to Windsor you're going to be confronted with workers who do not support your legislation. You don't want that bad publicity that will come out of that, whether it's a visit to London, whether it's Thunder Bay, whether it's eastern Ontario. You want to shut it down so that there's no public understanding of what you're trying to do with this labour legislation.

It has nothing to do with the need for any particular reason to have to have this legislation passed by Christmas. It's just a matter that you've decided that you can do better politically by ramming it through, avoiding any public involvement, avoiding any involvement outside of Metropolitan Toronto, any of the TV cameras and radio and newspaper that would come and cover those hearings. You don't want that. You don't want to face the people who have a right in a democratic society to make those presentations.

I want to go back to a little bit of the history of where we have come in terms of rule changes, because I heard the member for St Catharines make the comments that he made about the rule changes, and I understand his point of view on them. I agreed with the rule changes that came in, and I still agree with those changes, but I remember very clearly the negotiations that we were in.

I believe Mr Elston was the House leader for the Liberal Party and Mr Eves was the House leader for the

Conservative Party. We brought in a set of rule changes; you didn't like them. We adjourned the debate on those rule changes and we went into negotiations, and Mr Elston, Mr Eves and myself came to an agreement on the rule changes. In the end, the Conservative Party supported those rule changes. But I remember the discussions that took place. Very clearly, Mr Eves said on behalf of the Conservative Party that they had to have three days' debate—a minimum of three days—at second reading before there could ever be a time allocation motion brought in.

1740

We then had extensive discussions about what should happen and what provisions there should be in the standing orders for any piece of legislation that is considered important in terms of public hearings. We couldn't come up with a section that could apply across the board, because what you would define as an important piece of legislation might be different than what I would define. But there was an absolute commitment given that significant pieces of legislation would go out for public hearings across the province.

I think if you read the debate that took place on those rule changes, you will see that Mr Eves very clearly expressed concerns on behalf of the Conservative Party and the commitments that we had given as a government that all important pieces of legislation would have full public hearings across the province.

Again, the House leader for the official opposition referred to some of the time allocation motions that were brought in when we were the government, and I can tell you, I've gone through many of those in the last 24 hours to refresh my memory.

Bill 4, the temporary rent control bill: We had public hearings right across the province. Anybody who wanted to appear appeared.

The permanent rent control legislation: That had public hearings right across the province as well.

Bill 118, An Act to amend the Power Corporation Act: again, public hearings right across the province. Time allocation was moved, but it provided for public hearings across the province.

Bill 143, which was the waste management bill, the bill that dealt with garbage in Metropolitan Toronto: That had public hearings right across the region, very difficult public hearings, very difficult involvement, but we didn't shy away from it just because we were going to get bad publicity as a result. It was part of the process. It was part of the commitment. It was part of the fundamentals of the rule changes.

Bill 121, which was the permanent rent control bill: weeks and weeks and weeks of public hearings.

Bill 40, as I've said earlier, our labour legislation: five or six weeks of public hearings. Seven or eight communities across the province were heard from.

The auto insurance legislation, Bill 164: public hearings across the province. Time allocation was moved, but every community across the province was heard from.

Bill 47, which was an act dealing with the administration of justice: again, public hearings across the province. Time allocation was used, but the opposition wanted public hearings across the province. We put that into the time allocation motion.

Bill 8, the casino corporation bill: again, public hearings across the province. Anybody who wanted to be involved was involved, and people were heard. The opposition wanted public hearings across the province; we built that into the time allocation motion.

Bill 80, another amendment to the Labour Relations Act: There were hearings out in committee and people who wanted to be were heard from. The opposition wanted public hearings across the province; they got what they were asking for. It was built into the time allocation motion.

Bill 120, an act to amend certain statutes concerning residential property, a housing bill: It had public hearings across the province as well. Again, the opposition insisted on that; we built that into the time allocation motion.

I could go through all of the time allocation motions that we introduced. When the opposition said that it was necessary, we sat down and we negotiated as House leaders and the opposition House leaders. We didn't always agree on the exact terms of the time allocation motion, but there were public hearings across the province. And we allowed that to happen because that's the democratic process.

The approach that's now being taken by this government I don't think is going to allow for the opposition parties to proceed in any fair way. We cannot be seen to be cooperating with a government that's saying four days of public hearings, that they're not going to allow the public to be heard, and on the first major piece of legislation. You may think—and some of us have been around here long enough to know—you've got all the tools at your disposal with the new rules to get your agenda through in four and a half years and not to compromise or listen to the opposition. I'm telling you that it is going to be a miserable four and a half years. There are enough options and enough flexibility in certain parts of the rules that we will make your life miserable.

You may want to continue to celebrate the election in June. I can tell you, in the short period of time that I was in the government House leader's office you guys did a real good job of making my life miserable, and it isn't pleasant. If there isn't some sense of cooperation whereby we can sit down and discuss how legislation is going to be dealt with in this place, there will be no cooperation, there will be no opportunities to introduce legislation, and not only are you going to have an angry opposition, but you will make angry community after community, group after group.

People do want to be heard by government. The more arrogant you appear, the more arrogant you are, that will rub off in terms of public support and public opinion. Take a look at the 1981-85 period. One of the major reasons that the Tory party had a significant decline in public support was the arrogance that it wore when it had that majority government. You will wear it as well. It will come back to haunt every one of you.

You do not enjoy unanimous support on this point of

view and this approach even within your own caucus. I encourage the members of the Conservative caucus to have this discussion, to talk about what the process should be, to talk about involvement of the opposition parties but, more important, involvement of people in our communities when it comes to developing legislation, discussing legislation and approving that legislation.

I certainly agree with the approach that the House leader for the official opposition has taken. There's still enough time. The Minister of Labour is here. She can do what she said about a half-hour ago she wanted to do, and that was stand down this motion, adjourn the debate on this motion and ask the three House leaders to sit down and negotiate a mature way of handling this legislation, not in the way of just ramming it through and having everything passed by next Thursday.

I'm going to finish by asking the Tory back bench, just think about it. This legislation was introduced just a couple of weeks ago. We've had, as I said, five days of discussion in this place. Next Thursday, according to this time allocation motion, it will be law. Some of you come from municipal government. You know that when you go through the planning process, when you go through the development of bylaws, you involve people in your communities. You would never be able to get a major land development proposal through a municipal council in four or five weeks. You have to involve the community.

Magnify that many, many times. We are making the most significant changes to Ontario's labour laws in the history of this province. If this time allocation motion is followed, it will have been done in about four weeks. That's not good government, that's not good process, that's not democracy, and this should not happen this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: I thank the member for Windsor-Riverside. Further debate? I recognize the member for—

Mr Bob Wood (London South): London South.

The Acting Speaker: London South.

Mr Bob Wood: Not to be confused with the member for Cochrane North.

The Acting Speaker: Oh, we wouldn't want to confuse that, no. Go ahead.

Mr Bob Wood: He does not wish to be confused, either, with the member for London South.

It's my honour to give my first speech in the House today. I understand it's a tradition that such speeches are to be non-controversial and non-political in nature. Certainly, what I am about to say I consider to be relatively non-controversial and relatively non-political. I have a feeling the members of the House will come to their own conclusion on that.

As this is my first speech in this Legislature, I'd like to pay tribute to all previous representatives of the riding of London South. Each, in his or her own way, made a significant contribution to London and to Ontario. I will mention only two by name: the Honourable John White, former Treasurer, who had a major influence on both the Robarts and Davis governments; and the Honourable

Gord Walker, former minister of Industry and Trade, who was noted for his courage in speaking out and willingness to propose new ideas. Much of what Gord Walker proposed 12 years ago is now the policy of the government of Ontario. His determination to stand up and be counted is an example for all.

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As many members of this House know, I am a strong supporter of the Common Sense Revolution, and passage of this bill is an important part of the implementation of that plan. I might say that I intend to be quite candid today and I'm going to do so in the spirit of what the dean of this House, the member for Nickel Belt, said to the new members when he was kind enough to spend a day in assisting us in getting oriented. What he said was that he believed in tough questions and he believed in tough debate but he did not believe in personalities in this House. I would like to suggest to this House that the dean of the House was quite right in what he said.

What I'm about to say today I think will be fairly firm, but I want to share with all members of the House that it's not meant, in any sense, to be personal about anybody.

I think everybody here has strong beliefs. We know that the third party in particular has strong beliefs about this bill, which they're quite entitled to have and which they've been elected to put forward. On the other hand, it is also true that all members in this House have strong views and all members are here to put forward the point of view that they have been elected to put forward.

The suggestion has been made by some about the role of government backbenchers. I would like to assure this House that there are no trained seals among the government backbenchers. I would like to suggest to you and inform you that government members take their role as members of Parliament very seriously, and no one is going to be stronger in standing up to this government where it's needed than the members of this caucus. I would like to draw to the attention of this House that the government has the complete, 100% support of this caucus for this time allocation motion.

Interjections.

Mr Bob Wood: I am pleased that the first speech I make in this House is indeed about a time allocation motion, because this very much goes to the heart of the democratic process. The people of Ontario elected this government to bring jobs, investment and economic growth back to this province.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Will the members please come to order.

Mr Bob Wood: I understand why the third party is conducting a filibuster, and I think that's their job. They have the responsibility to attempt to put their point of view forward in whatever parliamentary ways they are able to do.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): You're shutting down debate. How are we supposed to put our point of view forward if you're shutting down debate?

The Acting Speaker: The member for Hamilton Centre, please come to order.

Mr Bob Wood: He's just getting rolling, Madam Speaker.

I understand that that's the job of the third party and all parties in this House. I would like to suggest, however, that they also have to take responsibility for the results of what they're doing. I would like to suggest to the House that the third party has demonstrated disregard for the democratic will of the people of Ontario by delaying and obstructing the business of this House.

We have heard discussion about consultations. I might say, there is no cabinet that has been more open to consultations and there's no cabinet that's been more open to consideration of suggestions about the implementation of this program.

Let me suggest, however, that this bill has been mandated by the voters, and if there are those who want to come forward, as some do—

Mr Christopherson: Show us. Show us in your speech, where this is in there.

Mr Bob Wood: —as some do, and ask this government to break the promises it made to the people of this province, if there are some who want to do that I'd like to suggest that the answer to them should be and will be a flat, unequivocal no.

I think that many in this province find it refreshing that there's a government that is actually doing after the election what it said it would do before the election. The people have spoken.

In closing, I would like to suggest to you that the opposition has a duty to fight the government agenda and they're doing that. We have a duty to keep faith with the people of Ontario, and we're going to do that as well.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate what limited opportunity is being given to us to comment on what's happening. I want to say to the member who just spoke, I don't know him, but I feel sorry for the fact that somebody sucked him into making his first speech on the most anti-democratic motion that this House has seen in the history of Ontario. I truly feel sorry for you. You've been had.

I only have a few moments. The comments that are coming from across the floor from the government are that they have a mandate to implement Bill 7, which is their anti-worker bill, and the reality is that most of what's in here was never talked about during the election. It's not mentioned in the Common Sense Revolution. They've got something like 67 words, or 65 words, in the CSR about what they'd do with labour law and they've got a 132-page bill that absolutely transforms, in a negative way for workers, the way that labour law is conducted in this province, and they have the audacity today to stand in their places and say, "There's no further debate; this is not going to committee," and they're arguing because we wouldn't accept their three flimsy excuses for public input, that somehow this is our fault.

Guess what, folks? You're the government. The reality is, you're ramming this through with no public input.

Your motion today denies any committee input. You're seeing to it that the most undemocratic move that a government could make is being done. That's what you're doing. You're taking the rules to the extreme, far beyond anything the Liberals or our government ever did or anything your predecessor Tories have done. You're consistently showing how afraid you are to face the people on these changes, because they've never been put to the people of Ontario.

Let me say to you and put you on notice that when you jam this through, you're going to make major mistakes in addition to hurting an awful lot of people and you're going to be held accountable for those mistakes. The drafting errors we saw from the Minister of Community and Social Services that almost put tens of thousands of disabled people out on the streets is only the beginning of the damage that can result from jamming through this kind of law with absolutely no input.

There have been no discussions. The Ontario Federation of Labour—the president, Gord Wilson, is here—beyond a cursory discussion with the minister there's been no substantive input. There will be no opportunity for opposition members to make amendments. There's no opportunity for communities to talk about how they've not only benefited from the law that existed, to put the lie to your claim that it would do damage, but they don't have the opportunity to show you where you're making mistakes.

This is so foolish, and it would be laughable if you weren't doing so much harm. You're going to regret this. You're going to regret it every day until the end of your term, because in Ontario, regardless of who gets elected and what their mandate is, the people expect fairness, which I remind the members is a word this government removed from the labour relations law. They took out the word "fair," took out the words "just cause." The people of Ontario expect a certain level of balance and fairness, and our House leader has shown, chapter and verse, where on every controversial bill we brought in—and we brought in our share of controversial bills—we made sure there was an opportunity to take that legislation out across the province and let people have their input. And today, this government, this Tory Harris government, on its first bill is denying the people of Ontario the chance to have their say. You ought to be ashamed.

The Acting Speaker: Would the member please take his seat.

Mr Eves has moved government notice of motion number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Those in favour, please say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be 15-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1801 to 1812.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted Barrett, Toby Bassett, Isabel Beaubien, Marcel Boushy, Dave Brown, Jim Carr, Gary Carroll, Jack Chudleigh, Ted Cunningham, Dianne DeFaria, Carl Dovle, Ed Ecker, Janet Eves, Ernie L. Flaherty, Jim Ford, Douglas B. Froese, Tom Galt, Doug

Gilchrist, Steve Grimmett, Bill Guzzo, Garry J. Hardeman, Ernie Harnick, Charles Hastings, John Hodgson, Chris Hudak, Tim Johns, Helen Johnson, Ron Jordan, Leo Klees, Frank Leach, Al Marland, Margaret Martiniuk, Gerry Maves, Bart Munro, Julia Newman, Dan

O'Toole, John Ouellette, Jerry J. Parker, John L. Pettit, Trevor Ross, Lillian Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Shea, Derwyn Skarica, Toni Smith, Bruce Spina, Joseph Sterling, Norm Tilson, David Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Villeneuve, Noble Witmer, Elizabeth

Wood, Bob

The Acting Speaker: Opposed?

Nays

Agostino, Dominic Bartolucci, Rick Bisson, Gilles Boyd, Marion Bradley, James J. Brown, Michael A. Caplan, Elinor Christopherson, David Cleary, John C. Conway, Sean G. Cooke, David S.

Crozier, Bruce
Curling, Alvin
Duncan, Dwight
Gerretsen, John
Grandmaître, Bernard
Gravelle, Michael
Hampton, Howard
Hoy, Pat
Kormos, Peter
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Lankin, Frances

Laughren, Floyd Marchese, Rosario Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony Miclash, Frank Morin, Gilles E. Patten, Richard Pupatello, Sandra Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony Wood, Len

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 54, the nays 33.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It now being past six of the clock, the House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow morning.

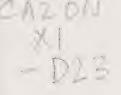
The House adjourned at 1816.

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Nº 17





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Thursday 26 October 1995

Speaker Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk Claude L. DesRosiers

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 26 octobre 1995



Président L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Greffier Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 October 1995

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 octobre 1995

The House met at 1004. Prayers.

VISITORS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Before we start with orders of the day, I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from the region of Abruzzo, Italy, headed by Mr Giovanni Mellila, president of the council of the region of Abruzzo. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

Orders of the day.

Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals (Mr Alex D. McFedries): There's no order of the day.

The Acting Speaker: We have no ballot item number 1, so we will have to recess until 11 o'clock so that Mr. Bradley, the member for St Catharines, can introduce ballot item number 2.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: We understood that there was to be unanimous consent this morning for Mr DeFaria's bill to be introduced. Because of activities that have happened in the House this week, that has not happened, and we are quite prepared to give unanimous consent for that bill to go forward.

The Acting Speaker: There was no question. If there is a question, of course, I will—

Mr David Turnbull (York Mills): Mr Speaker, we had indeed requested that such unanimous consent be granted and we were informed in advance that it would not be given. Therefore, Mr DeFaria is not here today.

Mr Michael Brown: There seems to be some confusion. It was certainly our view that there was unanimous consent, at least it was granted certainly by the official opposition, for that to have happened.

The Acting Speaker: He's not here. I have no other choice than to recess the House until 11 o'clock.

The House recessed from 1006 to 1100.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION

Mr Bradley moved private member's notice of motion number 1:

That, in the opinion of this House, since the Niagara Escarpment has been designated as a biosphere reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and since increased pressure is being applied on the government to weaken or dismantle the Niagara Escarpment Commission established by the former Progressive Conservative government of Premier William Davis to protect the integrity and character of these lands, this House fully supports the continued existence and present mandate of the commission to

protect this unique and beautiful natural asset which will enable it to be preserved for this and future generations in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Bradley has moved the resolution. You have 10 minutes.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you for the opportunity to begin, and to continue some remarks later on, on a resolution which I think is very timely and certainly most necessary at this time.

If members of the Legislature are wondering why a resolution of this kind would be brought forward at a time when we have the Niagara Escarpment Commission established and when it has its mandate and has created a plan, the reason is quite simple.

There are many forces out there who, whenever a new government is elected, wish to change the mandate of various agencies, boards and commissions as they exist in this province.

Representatives of the development industry have always been eager to develop on the Niagara Escarpment Commission lands; there are members of the aggregate industry who, because they are obviously interested in that industry and the profits that can be derived from aggregate use of the Niagara Escarpment area, are most prepared to see changes in the policy which has been established; and there are members of the professional leisure organizations and industry who are interested in having such things as ski hills, golf courses and other very active recreational uses of the Niagara Escarpment lands.

So this pressure is building, along with the pressure which would be exerted by some members of this Legislature who have long been opponents of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the mandate that it has.

It's interesting that, first of all, I'd mention this was established by the government of Premier William Davis, a Progressive Conservative government, and implemented largely by the individual who is now the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, the member for Carleton, Mr Norm Sterling. At the time, I believe his title was Provincial Secretary for Resources Development.

One of the pet projects of Mr Sterling, because of his very strong concern about the environment and about the natural beauty of our province, was to ensure that this gem that we have, this natural gem in this province, would be preserved for all time. He was given the mandate by Premier Davis to ensure that the Niagara Escarpment Commission was established, that there was a plan to be developed, and indeed that it would be implemented in such a way as it would be protection for the lifetime not only of those of us who exist now, but of future generations.

I want to commend Premier Davis on that initiative and I want to commend Norm Sterling on his strong support not only at the time it was initiated but since that time, where he has been supportive when governments have made changes to strengthen the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

This is an issue which I suspect crosses political lines. There are ideological lines that you have seen in this House on various issues, and I appreciate that they are divisive, I appreciate that they bring out polarization in this House. I suspect, however, that among members of all three caucuses there is very strong support for the protection of the Niagara Escarpment.

As you drive along, anywhere from Niagara Falls right along into the Grey-Bruce area, particularly people from outside of Ontario are intrigued by the fact that we've largely protected it from the kind of development that you see south of the border. They tend to be very commercial in the United States. This is a pretty large generalization to say that, but they tend to be more commercial.

You'll notice, for instance, one difference is you have huge signs right adjacent to the highway advertising commercial ventures. You don't see as many of those here because when our Ministry of Transportation was established, we set certain criteria to ensure that we didn't make a visual mess out of our highways, and all three political parties that have ruled in Ontario have tried to maintain that particular policy.

I suspect in the Progressive Conservative caucus and your various riding organizations, and among your supporters, as there are among Liberals and New Democrats, there are many people who believe that this is indeed a natural gem which should be protected and who applauded the initiative of Premier Davis and Minister Norm Sterling in the establishment and the ongoing support for the Niagara Escarpment and the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

It is a gem. It contains some rather interesting items that perhaps we don't consider. First of all, the area for which the commission is responsible is governed by Canada's largest environmentally based land use plan. It has been designated a biosphere reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, known to most of us as UNESCO.

About seven million people live within a hour's drive of it, and it is one of Canada's most beautiful physical features. It has more than 60 spectacular waterfalls, including Niagara Falls, by the way; more than 300 species of birds; 53 species of mammals; 36 species of reptiles and amphibians; 90 species of fish; 50 types of ferns; 37 types of wild orchids; 1,000-year-old white cedars, which are the slowest-growing trees in the world; the longest continuous footpath in Canada at 775 kilometres—that's the Bruce Trail—and 4,400 hectares of parks.

So you can see that perhaps something we take for granted as we drive along our highways or railways, if that is the case, or as we fly over the province, is a genuine asset and, in my view, has to be protected for future generations.

It is, I think, a justifiable source of pride for members of the Progressive Conservative Party that you are the party that established the commission, that you are the party that played a significant part in the development of the plan.

It's not often that in the House you find members of the opposition complimenting the government, and I believe that there are occasions where we should do that. I can assure you that there will be plenty of occasions when I will call into question some of the policies past, present and future of Progressive Conservatives, but this is not one area. This is one area where I have always been very supportive, and I hope that you will continue as members of the governing side, as all members of the House will, to support that very wise initiative on the part of Premier Davis and subsequently Premier Miller, and of course the NDP and Liberal premiers of this province.

It is, in my view, a difference between the United States and Canada. We often wonder what are the differences, and I think one of them that we see—and it's a generalization—is our general thrust towards the conserving of our natural assets. If you think of the terminology we use for your party across the floor, for instance, the Progressive Conservative Party, one of the aspects has always been to conserve that which is worth conserving. That's been an attraction, I think, to many of the people who have been in your party and an attraction which has, over the years, raised considerable support; 42 years of governing in the province and re-election this time.

I'm not suggesting that you're re-elected for this specific purpose, but I noticed in the Common Sense Revolution, your political document for election, that nowhere did it mention that you intended to weaken or dismantle the Niagara Escarpment Commission or to significantly alter the plan. I think that was very good on your part, I think that was very wise on your part, and I think it attracted some additional support from those who might not even normally have stayed with the Progressive Conservative Party. It clearly indicates that it crosses political lines.

1110

It is a natural beauty. It is a tourist attraction. We think of some of the things that are tourist attractions and some that are not. The member for Niagara Falls and previous members for Niagara Falls will always tell you that they wanted to see more than simply the wax museums, than simply some of the honky-tonk stuff in Niagara Falls.

So we have the Niagara Parks Commission, which has done an excellent job of maintaining the natural beauty. Take a look at the difference between Niagara Falls, Canada, and Niagara Falls in the United States and the way that they have dealt with the assets that are there. The Niagara Parks Commission—again established, I believe, by the Progressive Conservative government in Ontario—has done a good job of protecting those lands, has enhanced the natural beauty that is there, has prevented the kind of commercial intrusions in specific areas along the river which would not be an asset. Such is the case with the Niagara Escarpment Commission; such is the case with the Niagara Escarpment plan.

I believe it's important for us in this House today to be able to reaffirm our faith in this marvellous initiative on the part of Premier Davis, an initiative which has been subsequently enhanced by representatives of the Liberal government and the NDP government. So I look for widespread support among all members of all caucuses for this initiative this morning.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I'm pleased to rise in support of this resolution this morning, and I would certainly concur with the member for St Catharines in urging all members of this House to support this important resolution. I could not let this occasion pass without making a comment on the nature of the exercise that we're involved in this morning, because this is the first private member's resolution that we are dealing with in this Parliament and I think it's important that we reflect a little bit on that in addition to the important issue that the member for St Catharines has placed before us with respect to support for the Niagara Escarpment Commission continuing.

Private members' session is a time when, certainly those of us who have been around for a little bit or a long time know and I'm sure as the new members are learning, we as members, regardless of party affiliation, have an opportunity to debate resolutions and/or bills that are brought forward, putting aside our partisanship and putting aside our own caucus's views. I think that it's, for me as one, a very important part of the process of this Parliament, something which I as an individual would actually want to see expanded if at all possible.

I think it's in that spirit that I hope all members of this Legislature come to resolutions and to this time on Thursday mornings, when we have an occasion to set aside the daily partisanship that we have lots of opportunities to display throughout the rest of the debates and the proceedings of this House and to look at issues on their merit as they are presented, regardless of whom they come from, regardless of what particular political bent there may be and to just endorse or not endorse something on its merits.

On its merits, certainly this resolution warrants our full support. As the member for St Catharines has outlined, the Niagara Escarpment Commission has been in existence for some time, established at the time that William Davis was Premier of the province, and has continued to provide, as we know, a very useful role in the appropriate development and maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment.

It is, again as has been noted by the member for St Catharines, an area which few other areas surpass in their beauty and I think one of the things that sets us as a province apart from other provinces, even within Canada, and certainly one of the things that has been noticed, as indicated by the recognition by UNESCO, across the world. It is an area that we should be proud of. It is also something that through the Niagara Escarpment Commission we need to continue to be able to ensure its future in a sustainable and in a very ecologically minded manner, in a way that balances the different needs that exist in the region, in a way that perpetuates the use of that region in those balanced ways for the future, for our children to come.

I know that the pressures that the member for St Catharines has outlined from the development industries and others are there and are going to continue to be there. I think it's particularly incumbent at this time, when certainly we know that the government of the day is under pressure; we can argue to what extent those are real pressures or created pressures, but we leave that aside for a moment. We know that they will be under continued pressures to possibly look at dismantling this commission and we would certainly want to see them go very, very slowly in that respect because we know that the commission has been doing a very useful job. We would hope that they would see the wisdom in continuing that.

But I hope that today this House takes this opportunity presented to us by the member for St Catharines to exercise both a basic and very important right that we as individual members of this Legislature have, which is to look at something, as in this case, on its merits and to say, "That is a good idea; it should be supported by this House," and to then use that as a way to urge all of us, and certainly the government, to look carefully at issues such as this. So it's in that spirit that I rise to support, with appreciation to the member for St Catharines for raising this issue, his resolution.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I would like to congratulate the member for St Catharines in bringing forward this resolution. I would agree with the two previous speakers that this is a subject that crosses all three party lines. I have heard criticism, I have heard support from members from all three parties, and it's something that certainly is appropriate to be debated at this particular time.

I quite agree with the member for St Catharines that this type of subject does surface at the beginning of all new governments, because there are certainly groups of people who wish all kinds of combinations. Some people want to do away with the entire plan, some people want to do away with the commission, others support the commission and others support the plan. I certainly support the resolution, although I assume that the member would have no objection, as do many other supporters of the commission in support of the plan, with respect to the cutbacks that are being proposed by the government.

I think that all people who support this type of resolution would agree that everything can be improved, everything needs to be streamlined. There may be some waste in the Niagara Escarpment Commission or the bureaucracy of the Niagara Escarpment Commission that could be improved. In fact, speaking to some of the staff who work there and some of the members who are on the commission, they would agree with that proposal. But I do wholeheartedly congratulate the member for bringing it forward at this time. It certainly is an opportune time.

There have been different people who have spoken to me, both for and against it, and I'm sure the member for Grey-Owen Sound will have a few words in opposition. He and I have had a debate on this topic for a number of years and we're in the same party, and I respect everything that he says; we certainly disagree on this particular subject. I know there are members on all three sides who will feel the same way as I feel and feel the same way as the member for Grey-Owen Sound.

I received a letter—certainly, this rumour has been flying around recently and I think, as I say, it's an opportune time that this subject be raised—from the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment, which is a well-known group of people who support the Niagara Escarpment. It came from the president, Mr Baker, whom many of us have spoken to with respect to the issues in the Niagara Escarpment. He has written me a letter which perhaps may summarize some of the concerns of many people in the province of Ontario towards the continuance of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Niagara Escarpment plan.

1120

He says: "It is sometimes said that the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), the body charged with administering the act, infringes on proprietary rights and expropriates lands. This is simply not so. Also, considering the fact that more than 90% of all development applications are approved, one is hard put to understand the view, hotly proclaimed by some, that the NEC is an impediment to development.

"In our view the NEC is the most cost-effective instrument for the administration of the act. Transferral of development permit responsibility to municipalities will not only destroy any possibility of uniform policy and program application for the Niagara Escarpment as a whole, appropriate to its designation as a United Nations biosphere reserve, but it will also place heavy burdens on municipal staff and financial resources which they currently could not meet. It would require the costly hiring of suitably qualified planning expertise with probable increases of municipal taxes."

I think that this indeed gets to the crunch of the debate as to whether or not the commission should cease to exist or whether the jurisdiction of the administration of this plan should be passed to the municipalities.

I, for one, am certainly not in favour of it. If we look at the cost to administer the commission, I can tell you that if this transfer of jurisdiction is handed to the municipality, the cost to the property taxpayer will increase unbelievably.

In my riding, in the county of Dufferin specifically, notwithstanding Bill 163, there hasn't been a development of a planning department. And I can assure you, whether you're a regional municipality or whether you're a county, they are all going to be asking for more money with respect to the administration of this plan, and it ain't there. There is no more money. And either you support the plan or you don't support the plan.

More importantly, this particular area is a provincial plan. It's not a municipal plan. I know, and I speak to my friend from Grey, that the people in Grey feel quite differently—some of the people from Grey; I don't think he's got the entire support of the people from Grey, but some of the people from Grey certainly will disagree with some of the people in my riding. I can tell you that very fact: The philosophy of municipalities change, and I believe that the whole philosophy of the interpretation of

the Niagara Escarpment plan will be balkanized, and whether you're talking up in Tobermory or whether you're talking down in Niagara, you would conceivably have a whole slew of different plans. So I support the member specifically when he refers to the mandate.

I think that there are a number of things that could be done to the operation of the commission. For example, the Niagara Escarpment has suggested a number of noncontroversial amendments to the plan that would go a long way to streamlining the approval process, and there's no question that the streamlining of the process needs to be improved. This would decrease staff workload; it would improve upon the customer process. For example, there are two or three branch offices. I don't know whether you need all those. So all of those things need to be looked at, and it may well be that certain cutbacks will have to be taken.

I can tell you that there are other things, when you make applications for development permits, whether you're talking specifically with the various river authorities—all of those river authorities are able to charge a fee—and thereby cut back on the costs that go to the overall taxpayer. The Niagara Escarpment Commission can't do that because of some quirk in the act that precludes it from doing that. There are all kinds of things that could be done, and I assume the member would have no problem with a government or ministry looking into those specific issues.

I think when you look at the overall issue of this debate, it's all going to boil down to the fact, do you support municipalities running it or do you support an agency such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission? I can only emphasize that there are certain things that a council cannot do. A council cannot make a decision on a ministry undertaking—for example, a wayside pit, a quarry, a government structure or its own development proposals—and it's things like that as to why you have a commission.

I would encourage all members to support the resolution, because I think, as the member said, this is a natural gem that needs to be protected in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Kenora.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): No, I'm not from Kenora, but I wish I were. Actually, I'm from Algoma.

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry. Algoma, and I apologize.

Mr Wildman: No problem. It's the first one in the alphabet.

I rise to participate in this debate, and I want to congratulate the MPP for St Catharines, my friend, for introducing this very timely resolution into this House. I want to also say that while in the past my friend the member for Dufferin-Peel and I have had some differences, we both have been very much in favour of protection of the environment and have worked on a number of issues together. I must say that I agree almost completely with his remarks, which were very cogent and to the point.

The fact is that this is not a partisan issue. This is an issue that should unite all members of the House, if not all people in Ontario, in that we have an international treasure in the Niagara Escarpment, something that has been recognized by the United Nations as a biosphere reserve, something that we have the obligation, not just for the people of Ontario and for environmental protection in this jurisdiction but for the people of this whole world, to preserve. That's a very heavy and important responsibility.

I must say that I agree with my friend from Dufferin-Peel when he says you're either for or against the commission, you're either for or against protection of the biosphere reserve; you can't have it both ways.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Come on. You got it all wrong.

Mr Wildman: I didn't say that. Your friend from Dufferin-Peel said that, and I agree with him.

All three parties in this Legislature, in government, have supported the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the act. It was first introduced by my good friend the MPP for Carleton, who is now a member of the executive council of this government and sits on the government benches. I want to congratulate him not only for introducing the act in the first place and giving the responsibility directly to the commission reporting directly to the minister, but also for his continued support over the years for the commission and for the protection of the Niagara Escarpment.

I had the pleasure, when I was Minister of Environment and Energy for the previous government, to have the opportunity to complete the revisions of the Niagara Escarpment Plan to in fact strengthen the protection of the biosphere reserve. I'm pleased to say that the revised plan gained widespread support right across Ontario and had the support of all three political parties in this Legislature.

At the announcement I was joined by the former MPP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ruth Grier, who had been the minister immediately previous to me; by Ron Eddy, the then member for Brant-Haldimand, who represented the Liberal Party; and by the MPP for Carleton, to show that all three political parties were in support of the revised plan and strengthening the protection for the Niagara Escarpment.

As the member for Dufferin-Peel pointed out, there was a tremendous amount of pressure during the last stages of the revision of the plan to have controls for the protection of the environment, and for the protection of the escarpment specifically, given to municipalities. There was a letter-writing campaign initiated by certain groups, and supported by a number of municipal politicians in the area affected, asking me to give control, give the right to make decisions on severances, for instance, to municipalities.

I did meet with representatives of Grey county and their representative on the escarpment commission, and we talked about ways that would help to streamline the operation of the commission, but I made clear on behalf of our government that we had absolutely no intention of

balkanizing, to use the member for Dufferin-Peel's word, the operation of the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

1130

It is imperative that this be looked at on a province-wide basis. It cannot be properly protected if you have each municipality along the escarpment making varying decisions about protection. Some municipalities may in fact be stronger in their protection than others, so that you would have situations where property owners in one municipality might be able to gain a severance, for instance, or to have new development on their property, and a property owner in an adjacent municipality would not have the same opportunity. That would not be appropriate, in our view.

It is the responsibility of this government to protect the mandate of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and to maintain it. As a matter of fact, when the act was brought in by the Conservative government under the premiership of Bill Davis, when it was brought in by the MPP for Carleton, who was at that time the minister responsible, he made it quite clear in the drafting of the original act that the minister was responsible. The minister, a member of the cabinet, had direct responsibility for maintaining the mandate of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and ensuring that the commission properly protected this international environmental treasure.

I congratulate the MPP for Carleton for taking that very difficult position as a member of the Bill Davis administration. Again, as I said, I congratulate him for his continuing support for the commission and for the protection of the Niagara Escarpment.

My friend from St Catharines in his opening remarks talked about some of the unique environmental aspects of the escarpment, things in terms of the flora and fauna that must be protected; not just the unique geological landform that is the escarpment but also the whole ecosystem of the Niagara Escarpment that must be protected.

I think we have made significant progress in that protection, recognizing that the land owners in the area must have the right to live and enjoy their property. As the member for Dufferin-Peel pointed out in one of the comments he read into the record, over 90% of the applications for development along the escarpment are approved by the commission, so 10% are denied.

Those aren't my figures. They were read into the record by the Conservative member, and I appreciate that he has made that clear to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

The fact is that if we are to protect this international environmental treasure, we must have a body that has the responsibility for dealing with it from one end to the other, and that body must have the power and the responsibility for weighing proposals for development in the region in a way that is fair but that has uppermost for consideration the protection of the environment and the escarpment.

So I agree with those who supported our government's decision not to transfer the controls to municipal councils, and I would hope that all members of the House, as the

member for Dufferin-Peel suggested, would support this resolution introduced by the member for St Catharines.

I've heard that there may be one or two members in the Legislature who are not as enthusiastic as the rest of us about the protection of the escarpment. It has even been suggested that the MPP for Grey-Owen Sound has proposed that we should get rid of the commission—not only change the mandate but that we should eliminate the commission. Now, I'm sure that's apocryphal. I'm certain that no responsible member of this Legislature representing his constituents would say that we should not have a commission to protect the escarpment.

I look forward to the further debate, and I'm sure we will hear from the member for Grey-Owen Sound in his strong and vibrant support for the protection of the escarpment and for the maintenance of the mandate of the commission as proposed in this resolution by my friend from St Catharines. I urge all members to support this resolution.

Mr Murdoch: I should start off by thanking the honourable member for St Catharines for bringing this issue to the floor, because I've been one of the main reasons for a very long time and I'm pleased to be afforded the opportunity to debate it today.

However—this may come as a surprise to the honourable member—I will not be throwing my support behind his motion. In light of the widespread dissent surrounding the operations of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, it is completely absurd for this House to support "the continued existence and present mandate of the commission."

First, I think I should set the record straight. Contrary to popular belief, I have no desire to promote the development of strip malls along the 725-kilometre stretch of escarpment land from Niagara Falls to Tobermory. The Niagara Escarpment is one of Ontario's most important natural features. It provides beauty, a place of rest, relaxation and recreation. Protecting it is a legitimate goal of our society.

However, private ownership of property is also a fundamental part of Ontario's social contract. The rights associated with property ownership form one of the basic foundations of democracy. Therefore, what we as political leaders must do is locate and maintain that delicate balance between the protection of important natural assets and the rights of property owners.

To avoid confusion, discussion of the Niagara Escarpment must be broken down into three parts.

First is the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, established in 1973 with the primary objective to maintain the Niagara Escarpment as a continuous natural environment. I don't think anyone here, myself included, will dispute the intention of the act or its basic components—no problem.

Second is the Niagara Escarpment Plan, developed in accordance with the act over a 12-year period. The plan was originally passed in 1985 and serves as a framework of objectives and land use policies to oversee the development and preservation of the escarpment. The plan is continually subject to amendments and change, and I

have many opinions in this regard. However, due to time constraints, I cannot get into this today. Therefore, today, the plan—no problem.

However, the third element, the Niagara Escarpment Commission: I have big problems with this. I have long believed that while we must preserve the escarpment land, the Niagara Escarpment Commission is biased. It is an undemocratic body which has no even standards when rendering decisions.

On what do I base this opinion? Some 35%, or 100,000 acres, of escarpment area lies in Grey county. That's a lot of land in my riding under the control of the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Having been involved in politics at the municipal and provincial levels for over 16 years, I have had direct contact with the commission and have witnessed first hand its haphazard, inconsistent decision-making process. In my opinion, the Niagara Escarpment Commission should be scrapped in its entirety.

This opinion is based on three main things: First, it costs the taxpayers of Ontario millions of dollars unnecessarily; second, it is an undemocratic body in both makeup and making decisions; and third, it has not fulfilled its original mandate.

First, costs: The NEC costs the taxpayers of Ontario between \$2 million and \$3 million annually in direct operating and administrative costs. This says nothing of secondary or spillover costs to local planning and development requirements imposed by the commission, which have been estimated to increase the annual costs of operations to approximately \$5 million per year.

We must ask ourselves, in light of the financial reality facing this province and our initiatives to review all government operations in an effort to weed out inefficiency, duplication and waste, if continuing in this manner is a wise expenditure of Ontario taxpayers' dollars.

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Second, the commission is undemocratic. The members of the commission are appointed by the province, not elected by the people they govern. The commission is comprised of 17 members: nine public-at-large representatives, few of whom actually live on or near the escarpment, and one representative from each of the eight counties and regions, who have supposedly been chosen by each municipality. This in itself is a crock.

I remember an instance when I sat on county council. We submitted a name to the province, but the government of the day would not accept it, suggesting we try again with someone of a more appropriate political stripe. I think the member who presented this motion will understand this.

The commission has become bureaucratic and isolated, often rendering inconsistent decisions. I need only look at the list of examples in Grey county—which, incidentally, is as long as my arm—to illustrate the lack of consistency in the commission's decision-making process. Some of the things that have happened: One of the chairs of the commission decided his property should be split into two 50 acres—no problem. When someone else in Keppel township decided to do the same thing, he made the deciding vote: no. There's one thing right there.

Mr Wildman: Come on, Bill. Say that outside.

Mr Murdoch: I'll say that anywhere.

Let's talk about some soccer fields. A bunch of kids in Owen Sound wanted to have soccer fields near the escarpment, green fields with a few posts. No, no; the commission said this was inconsistent with the plan. A few green fields and some soccer posts and maybe a place to park—no, they turned that down.

Let's talk about Stairland, a business. The building was already there, and they wanted to make stairs inside a building. No, it was a change of use—couldn't do that. Many things like that have happened in our area, and I could go on.

Further to this, in 1993, two hearing officers and members of Ontario's Environmental Assessment Board produced a report, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, which confirmed many of its own views and verified much of what residents in my riding have been saying for years. The result of eight months of public hearings, their comments were both fair and objective. Perhaps this is why they were ignored by the government of the day. Also included in this report was a recommendation that planning controls should be given over to local governments. Local governments should be able to make the decisions, not a commission which is biased in its decisions.

When we first started this commission it was a mandate that it should be given up within two years. That's what the Conservative government put in there. What happened is, two governments over here, both the Liberals and the NDP, decided to ignore that and build a commission which was out of control, a commission that should be scrapped, a commission that—

Mr Wildman: How come your colleague supports it?

Mr Murdoch: Well, why didn't you support it? You should have taken the original mandate, which the member has put in here, and scrapped the commission within two years, giving authority over to the local politicians.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to conclude with some more remarks about the resolution I put before the House. I've appreciated the remarks of all members of the Legislature on this, including the member for Grey-Owen Sound, despite the fact that I am diametrically opposed to his views on this. I think it's important that his views be put forward and I am pleased he was able to be with us today to express those views.

I find myself more in agreement, naturally, with the member for Dufferin-Peel, who was the Environment critic for the Progressive Conservative Party in the last Parliament and was one who was interested in environmental issues and one who knows the issues, I think, which relate to the Niagara Escarpment. I appreciate his thoughts on that and some of the information he's provided, which I think is valuable to all members of the House before we make our judgement this morning.

I appreciate as well the comments of the member for Dovercourt, who indicated his support for the resolution

and the reasons he would support it; and the member for Algoma, who is a former Minister of Environment and Energy, and an individual, by the way, who has had others in Ontario make judgements about assets and land within his riding.

You see, I think we get to an issue where we look at who owns what, who has jurisdiction over what. It seems to me, when we have assets of this kind, that all the people of Ontario have an interest in it. I used to listen to people say, for instance, that we in Ontario had no business talking about the oil industry out west. I thought the oil in western Canada was as much a part of Canada as the auto industry in Ontario, the forests of Quebec, or the fish we catch inland or offshore on our west and east coasts.

I believe that to be the case in Ontario as well, that all of us have an interest, regardless of where we happen to reside in Ontario, in the various natural assets we have. I know from time to time it has annoyed local people when those from outside that jurisdiction have passed some judgements, but very often they have been judgements which have enhanced the natural position of this province over the years.

I do not believe, as the member for Dufferin-Peel does, that it is practical to turn jurisdiction over to the local municipalities. I have a couple of additional reasons to the ones mentioned by the member for Dufferin-Peel and the member for Algoma. The first, of course, is that some of these municipalities do not want to take over this jurisdiction, and there's good reason for it. There is a cost, there is staff involved, and there is controversy. Many of those at the local level even prefer to have a provincial authority with jurisdiction. The reason for that is that locally it is much easier to put pressure on individual politicians.

I sat on a municipal council for some seven and a half years before coming to this House, and I know many others in this House and previous parliaments who have sat on municipal councils, and I assure you that the pressure that can be placed by local developers and others on local politicians is far greater than that which can be placed on those at the provincial level. I think there is far more objectivity in cases of this kind.

Mr Murdoch: Are you saying they can't handle this? Is that what you're saying? Local politicians can't look after things. Is that what you're saying?

Mr Bradley: The member for Grey-Owen Sound has a different point of view. I will not get into the many severances which were granted in Grey county when he was in a position to be influencing those severances, because that does not really affect us today in this resolution. But I want to say in a general sense that there is that concern, that friends of people can be granted favours at a local level in a much easier way than they can when there's a detached authority for decisions of this kind.

I think there are those in local municipalities who want to make decisions of a local nature who would still hold this position with such things as the Niagara Parks Commission or the Niagara Escarpment Commission or perhaps the St Lawrence Parks Commission.

So I believe that is an important component. I agree with the member for Dufferin-Peel that it is very difficult to have the various interpretations that individual municipalities can place on a plan. He referred to the term "balkanization." I think most of us recognize what that means when we look at various approaches, conflicting approaches that are taken, as opposed to having one authority in charge of it.

One of the reasons I was worried and brought forward this resolution was that in the Owen Sound Times—

Mr Murdoch: Sun Times. Get it right.

Mr Bradley: —Sun Times; the member will correct me. Mr Murdoch wants the Niagara Escarpment Commission scrapped—and we all know that; he's said that today—but he recently told his local newspaper, the Owen Sound Sun Times, that Ontario's Environment minister, Brenda Elliott, had said to him, "I think you'll like what we're going to do with the commission."

Mr Murdoch: Well, what's wrong with that?

Mr Bradley: Listen, cabinet ministers can say various things to various people and can be interpreted in any way you wish, and I'm not being critical of the minister in this case. I am simply concerned when I hear the speech which has been made today by the member for Grey-Owen Sound and then I read that the minister is going to do something he likes with the Niagara Escarpment Commission. I think even he would agree with me that there would be reason for concern for somebody who has taken the position I have.

I think what you have to watch for is not only the major developments but the individual severances which are granted, because severances are often the death by a thousand cuts that we see happening.

Mr Murdoch: Maybe we could talk to your exminister about the same things. Talk to Ben there. Ben did something very nice for us. Why don't you talk to Ben about this?

Mr Bradley: I've certainly concerned the member for Grey-Owen Sound, who is heckling, and I appreciate his strong feelings.

I also know that it's easy to bash Toronto or to bash the provincial government. It's good local politics to do it, as a matter of fact, when you live outside of Toronto.

Mr Murdoch: Jean-Marc, don't vote for this.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Bradley: My friend the member for Grey-Owen Sound has played this card on many occasions, where he said, "Those people in Toronto never listen to us." Even in the Niagara Peninsula I've heard people say that from time to time. It may be good local politics. I don't know whether it develops good province-wide policy simply to provide those kinds of arguments.

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What we all have to recognize is that once we destroy, once we develop in an expansive way, natural lands, we cannot restore them. Once you tear up the trees, once you tear up the farm land and replace it with a development, it can no longer be retained for future purposes. In some cases, we will have development in some places in

Ontario. That's part of the process. There are areas, however, that we wish to maintain in their present state, in their natural beauty.

Most people in Ontario, I would suggest the majority of people, would not want to see uncontrolled quarrying, uncontrolled ski hills and golf courses or just uncontrolled, perhaps even subdivision, development in areas of natural beauty. There are many places in Ontario where we can have that kind of development and it makes sense to have that development. It does not in this specific instance.

I also am supportive of the fact that the Niagara Escarpment Commission comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Originally it was placed under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It seems much more sensible to have it under a ministry which has concern and responsibility for protecting the environment.

So I would encourage Premier Harris and members of the government to resist any pressure to take it out of that ministry and place it under the jurisdiction of another ministry.

The other thing that I think we have to look at, because the member for Grey-Owen Sound made this case, is the kind of people you appoint to the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

If you have a certain mandate, if you have a commission established, if you have a plan accepted, and then you turn around and appoint people who are diametrically opposed to it, it seems to me that you have made the wrong judgement. You want people who have balance on these commissions. I don't think you want people who are extremist on either side, because you want the kind of balance that will bring forth good decisions, thoughtful decisions.

And if there is a bending to the pressure to have a majority of people who wish to pave the Niagara Escarpment as opposed to retaining it, then I think despite the mandate and despite the legislation and despite the plan that is established, you would defeat it by having those kinds of appointments made.

I would hope the government, as it has in years gone by, would make those kinds of appointments where there is balance and where there is a commitment to the preservation of the escarpment among those who are appointed. The new government will have that opportunity to make many of these appointments. I'll be watching with great interest as they do, and I hope I can indicate in committee, when it comes before the committee, my strong support for the appointments that the government will be making.

I think we cannot underestimate the designation of this property as a biosphere reserve by UNESCO. There are not many properties in this world that have that designation. That is an international designation. That is something which was developed by people from the scientific community, and others, making a judgement. They assess it very carefully before they make such a declaration, and then it is declared a biosphere reserve. I know there are some people in the province who would like to see that

designation removed, because then it makes it easier to develop the lands which are contained within the escarpment.

Again, I say, compare to many other jurisdictions that have not been as progressive and as conservative—I say that in terms of conservation—as we have in Ontario under Premier Davis, Mr Sterling and two subsequent governments, that have not made that choice to preserve a natural asset, and you see the kind of hodgepodge of development that takes place when that happens. That is why I think it's so important that we have this preserved not only for the present generation but for future generations.

I emphasize the fact with a good deal of passion, if I may, that once you develop it, you cannot restore it to its original character and state. That's why I consider it important that when we make decisions of the kind that we do in this House this morning, we send a message to the people of this province that we want, as the Conservative Party has always said over the years, to conserve that which is best in our history and in our natural resources.

I certainly hope that members of the governing party and the two opposition parties will be unanimous, though I suspect that may not be entirely possible with my friend from Grey-Owen Sound sitting in the House and from some of the cheering that has been provided for him. I always respect, of course, the viewpoints of others, even when I disagree vehemently with them.

I believe this is a fairly momentous occasion for us. Let me share with members very briefly some of my observations of development that is taking place.

There are some people who believe that paving natural assets—farm land, for instance—from Toronto to Fort Erie, and having one megalopolis, would be something that everybody should like, because it would be good for the economy. I would suggest it would be bad for tourism. One of the attractions of the Niagara Peninsula is the largely rural nature of it. A lot of people enjoy the Niagara Peninsula for that reason.

I lament very much my drive, either by train or by car, between St Catharines and Toronto over 18 years in this Legislature, because I have seen the development of prime agricultural land. The other day—I will annoy some people in Grimsby by saying it—I drove into Grimsby, just to see what was happening, just beneath the escarpment, the beautiful agricultural land, the lovely natural setting, and it was being bulldozed for subdivisions.

I understand there have to be subdivisions in Ontario and that there is land that should be developed for subdivision purposes, but if you could only have seen the original state of it, that which would attract people, and then watched the bulldozers knocking down the trees and removing the natural state. In some cases, that's quite appropriate, we should have subdivision development, but in this case, I thought, there we are, right below the escarpment, natural beauty, and here's what we're doing. There must be other places more appropriate for development in Ontario.

So I encourage all members of this House to think not only of the present, to think not only of the profits that can be made from the development of this land, but of the genuine asset that it is to us in terms of tourism and in terms of simply the aesthetic beauty that all of us could enjoy.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): You have two minutes.

Mr Bradley: I have a final opportunity to wrap up in two minutes, you'll be pleased to know, and probably another opportunity to commend my colleague from Dufferin-Peel and others.

People often believe that members of the Legislature don't have individual power and don't have individual responsibility, and there's much truth to that. Let me assure members of this House, as the member for Dovercourt did earlier today, this is the one opportunity that you have ordinarily—and I presume there's no government whip on this or opposition whip on this—this is the opportunity that you have to make an individual judgement. That is what the private members' hour is for.

The private members' hour is not for government intimidation. You are outside the jurisdiction of the cabinet or the chief government whip when you are making these judgements, and in opposition the same is true. That's why I've always enjoyed the Thursday morning sessions, where we have that opportunity to render an individual judgement on a policy issue of the day.

At long last, those who have been, for whatever reason, excluded from the cabinet, very often because of geography or other considerations—they may be very talented people but they have not been included as a member of the cabinet—you have the opportunity to pass that judgement. You have the opportunity to make a decision, not only for yourselves and those who are here today, but for your children, your grandchildren, for generations to come, for the people of this province and for the people who wish to visit this province to enjoy a national asset and a provincial asset, the Niagara Escarpment.

The Deputy Speaker: We will now deal with ballot item number 1 standing in the name of Mr Bradley.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): Number 2. The Deputy Speaker: If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, they will please rise.

Mr Bradley has moved private member's resolution number 1.

Interjections: It's 2.

Mr Murdoch: Number 1 was stopped this morning by the guys on the other side.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye." Those opposed to the motion will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell. *The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.*

The Deputy Speaker: Would you please take your seats.

All those in favour of Mr Bradley's motion will please rise and stay standing until the Clerk has recorded your names.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Munro, Julia
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	O'Toole, John
Boyd, Marion	Duncan, Dwight	Pouliot, Gilles
Bradley, James J.	Grandmaître, Bernard	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Sergio, Mario
Castrilli, Annamarie	Hoy, Pat	Silipo, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Jordan, Leo	Tilson, David
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Colle, Mike	Marland, Margaret	Wildman, Bud
Cordiano, Joseph	Miclash, Frank	Wood, Len

The Deputy Speaker: Those opposed to the motion will please rise and stay standing until the Clerk has recorded your names.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Froese, Tom	Murdoch, Bill
Baird, John R.	Grimmett, Bill	Pettit, Trevor
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Wood, Bob
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Young, Terence H.
Clement, Tony	Martiniuk, Gerry	
Fisher, Barbara	Maves, Bart	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 30; the nays 16.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business have been completed, and I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30.

The House recessed from 1210 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NATIONAL UNITY UNITÉ NATIONALE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): This is a heart-wrenching time for this country. People from all walks of life, young or old, are banding together, marching, rallying, talking, praying and pleading with Quebeckers to keep this country, the country ranked number one in the world, unified. As we all know, there will be a huge country-wide rally in Montreal tomorrow. Everyone is doing their part. Bus companies are offering free transportation; Canadian, Air Canada and Via Rail have slashed their fares to Montreal. Canadians from coast to coast will be there waving the flag we are so proud of to show Quebeckers how much this country and this province mean to all of us.

Those people unable to attend the rally in Montreal will show support in other ways. Tomorrow the university youth of this province will be rallying together to send a message to the youth of Quebec. This rally is being organized by Ontario Youth for Canada, a non-partisan coalition of Ontario university students. The group was formed with the sole purpose of letting Quebeckers know that we want them to remain part of Canada.

The rally will be held in front of Queen's Park, on the front lawn, at 11:30. Hundreds of passionate university students from campuses across Canada will participate. From Queen's Park, the rally will head to Quebec, where they will deliver their message personally to Quebeckers.

I encourage everyone passing by Queen's Park at 11:30, or anyone who has the time to make it, to join these students and show the support that we all have for a strong and united Canada.

M. Gilles Pouliot (Lac-Nipigon): J'ai un message pour mes collègues de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Ce message concerne, bien sûr, l'unité nationale, l'unité du pays.

Tomorrow, tens of thousands of Canadians from coast to coast to coast will be in la province de Québec forming a caravan pour l'unité nationale, the magnitude and the sincerity of which has seldom been experienced.

Of course, it's sponsored by Ontario Youth for Canada, our future, one of the many groups that comes from all over this vast and magnificent land to say aux gens du Québec, «Rappelle-toi que lundi, en ce jour historique, le 30 octobre 1995, nous, on te tend la main. Avec toute la sincérité et l'émotion que l'on puisse commander, on te dit : "Gens du Québec, on vous chérit. Québécois, on t'aime. Québécois, ne me quitte pas."»

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): I'd like to share the following statement.

The possibility of Quebec separating from the rest of Canada is the most significant and challenging event for our entire country in recent memory.

La culture et la langue du Québec sont d'une importance majeure à la caractéristique du Canada. Le Canada souffrirait sans lui. À cet égard, le Québec est unique, et sa richesse et sa force ajoutent à la diversification du Canada. En plus, les ressources et les richesses économiques du Québec contribuent à la prospérité et l'unité canadiennes.

I strongly believe that the majority of Canadians recognize these facts and want Quebec to remain a part of Canada. Many in Quebec may feel isolated by past political attempts to resolve some of the differences diversity brings. However, it is important to remember that the history of the bipartisan stage and day-to-day political wrangling have a way of hiding the true sentiments of the common citizen. In fact, it could be argued that dissatisfactions separating people are often aggravated and accentuated by one force or another for the purpose of achieving benefits for the few.

Vous devez tous réaliser que les intérêts de certaines gens ne représentent pas l'entièreté de la population, entraînés souvent par besoin politique et pour leur propre bien. Ce genre de comportement peut être toléré lorsqu'une rivalité politique s'ensuit, mais surtout pas lorsque l'enjeu de notre pays est sur le point d'être divisé en permanence.

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): My comments today are directed to some comments that were made recently in the press by the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, who said, regarding the

privatization of the question of the LCBO: "To get this issue on to the table at this point in time is more difficult than I first anticipated. I'm hopeful that we can get on with it in the not-too-distant future."

I want to say to the government and to the minister that we think this is a sensible approach, given the fact that the jury is still out on the benefits of privatization in many jurisdictions. We hope that, should the government decide to engage a commission to study privatization, they would consider all options and not simply only privatization.

We would ask the minister in the meantime to consider, with input from the LCBO, making regulatory and operational changes that would serve to modernize retail sales of alcohol in Ontario. I know there is much consensus around these issues on both sides of the House and among the general public.

GALBRAITH BAIL RESIDENCE

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I rise to bring to the attention of this House a tragedy which is occurring in Fort York because of the reckless, mulish way this government is making decisions.

Yesterday you informed Paul Dufresne, the director of Galbraith Bail Residence, that you intend to proceed with closing that facility as announced on October 5, even though Paul has since made you personally aware that Galbraith house is not a halfway house, that your actions would send innocent men to jail, and that sending them to jail not only infringes on their rights but it's not cost-effective.

But there's more. Not only will our community lose this residence, but because the rent it pays to St Matthias Church is 40% of the parish income, closing Galbraith house may also close an Anglican church that has been part of our community for 122 years. Galbraith Bail Residence provides a supervised setting for men who have been released by the courts on bail pending trial. Of no fixed address, without family support, technically innocent, these alleged offenders would otherwise languish in jail waiting for as much as two years for trial.

These men are often acquitted or receive suspended sentences when they come to trial. The counselling and support they receive during their pre-trial period at Galbraith allows these men to start or continue treatment for addiction, to work or to go to school. At Galbraith lives are reconstructed; in jail lives are destroyed.

The church services your cuts are threatening include pastoral support for Galbraith residents, a drop-in for psychiatric patients, a food bank and so on. The decision makes no sense. Would you rather destroy lives and a church than admit that in your hurry you made a mistake?

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia): I rise to introduce 47 people sitting in the gallery who are my guests today. I'm grateful for the support they have given me and the interest they have shown in politics. Among this group is my assistant, Rose Hodgson, who served our community under my good friend the Honourable Andy Brandt, who's sitting on my right in the members' gallery. Back to Rose Hodgson: She's the chairperson of the Canada Day committee in Sarnia that contributes to Canadian unity.

I was born in Lebanon. Canada is my country of choice. I was born the son of a Baptist minister and I was taught to love my neighbour. Where there is a will, there is a way. There is a will among all of us to stay together in this country. We have 10 provinces and I want to continue to live in a country with 10 provinces. We have been friends for a long, long time and we should continue to be friends. We should continue to work for a better future. Where there's a will, there's a way. I applaud the spirit of unity that has made this country the best in the world.

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Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): At 4 o'clock Friday morning, hundreds of buses will be leaving Metropolitan Toronto, going to Montreal, saying that they care for this country, they care for Quebec. I wish those people well and I wish this country well, because I think it is the most critical time in our history and that we should show that we do care and we want to keep this country together.

I hope that those of us who cannot make it to Montreal will fly the Canadian flag this weekend or fly the fleur-delis on the porches, on the barns, on the verandas, on the storefronts, on the gas stations right across this great province to show Quebec that we do care and to show Canadians that we have the best country in the world.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): The government has now decided that they are not going to hold any public hearings at all into their anti-worker Bill 7 and are attempting to spin it out that somehow this is the responsibility or the fault of the opposition. The reality is that this government has a majority in this House. They have arbitrarily set a deadline of the end of this year, which is of their own making. There's no requirement for this to be done by the end of the year or any other time.

They have decided that that's their personal deadline, and therefore they offered up the people of Ontario a pittance, a sham, a shell of a process: a mere four days here in Toronto only, no opportunity to go across the province as we did with much of the controversial legislation that we had and, I might add, done so at the behest, the request and the demand of the then third party in opposition. We acquiesced and took it out into the field, knowing that we would be taking some heat. But we felt the democratic process was important.

This government has said: "No. Nothing's more important than our own personal agenda, and therefore, if we have to ram it through, this 132-page document, without any public input, that's too bad. We have to do it to meet our own political deadline."

This is the most anti-democratic process and therefore the most anti-democratic government this House has ever seen, and it's a shame.

UNITÉ NATIONALE NATIONAL UNITY

M. Ed Doyle (Wentworth-Est): Je suis né au Québec, où j'ai vécu les 23 premières années de ma vie. Au cours de ma carrière, j'ai travaillé dans de diverses régions de notre grand pays : en Alberta, au Québec ainsi qu'ici en Ontario.

Everywhere that I've worked I've felt I've been accepted. We are Canadians. That is the beauty of this country. I was born in Quebec, and now I have the privilege of serving in the Ontario Legislature. Had I been born here in Ontario, then I too would have had the right to serve à l'Assemblée nationale du Québec. If we had been two countries, then I would not have been afforded such an opportunity. It is this freedom of mobility that we ought to cherish and to support.

Mon espoir est que nous demeurons ensemble, un pays uni et fort. Quand je pense au Canada, je vois les Rocheuses et les beaux lacs du Bouclier canadien, en même temps que le fleuve St-Laurent et les Laurentides.

For the last 128 years, we have shared friendship, pride and determination. We have forged a country in which everything we have today was achieved together, at times with laughter and at times with sorrow. Nevertheless, it was accomplished together.

En ce moment, mes parents font leurs tâches quotidiennes dans deux petits villages québécois et, comme moi, mon père y est né. Au cours des derniers mois et des derniers ans, lors des conversations avec mon père, qui a 92 ans, il m'a dit, «Mon fils, je suis né un Canadien, et j'ai l'intention de mourir un Canadien.»

I think I speak for all members of this House when I say that Ontarians share my dream of a united nation, one that includes Quebec.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Is there a unity statement today, Premier?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Mr Speaker, I think that you will find there is unanimous consent to move a motion at this time and for the three leaders to speak to that motion.

The Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent at this time. Is that agreed? Agreed.

NATIONAL UNITY UNITÉ NATIONALE

Mr Harris moved, seconded by Mrs McLeod and Mr Rae, that this House resolves that the Legislature and the people of Ontario affirm that we value and cherish Canada and Quebec's distinctive character within our country. In partnership, Canadians have built a country that many people regard as the very best in the world. We have social, cultural and economic strengths that are the envy of virtually all nations.

Ontarians seek change in the federal system. We have demonstrated this commitment to change in the past and we continue to do so. The status quo is not acceptable. Ontario will be a strong ally for change within the Canadian federation. We agree that we need a more functional, harmonious country and a more flexible and decentralized federation.

This Legislature and the people of Ontario appeal to the people of Quebec with an open heart and with a generosity of spirit to remain a part of this country and to work together for change and progress within Canada.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I want to open with a thank you to all members, all 130 of this Legislature, particularly a thank you to Mrs McLeod and a thank

you to Mr Rae for their advice and for their assistance in developing and expressing Ontario's position with regard to the Quebec referendum.

It is a demonstration of our commitment to Canada, and that our deep and at times divisive differences over policy or direction, divisive differences on some issues, do not preclude us from being united on issues that are important not just to Ontarians but to all Canadians. The love that we all share for Canada extends, then, in this context to each other in this legislative chamber, and our love in this context extends to Canadians in Quebec.

As Premier of Ontario and as a proud citizen of Canada, it is my privilege to introduce this resolution which I do believe expresses the feelings of all parties and all 130 members of the Legislature and, I believe, of the people of the province of Ontario. We are now only days away from a referendum that will have a profound impact on Quebec and a profound impact on all of Canada.

On October 30, Quebeckers will be called upon to make a choice: to remain in Canada or to separate from our nation. Today, in this Legislature, we are setting aside our partisan differences to join together with one voice to say we love Canada and we want it to stay together.

Ontario and Quebec are the two largest provinces in Canada. Canadians elsewhere call our two provinces, collectively, central Canada. We are central Canada.

Together, as neighbours and as friends, we helped build this nation that now stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The goodwill between Ontario and Quebec, the myriad links, personal links, professional links, business and political, are links that we have built up over almost two centuries, and they are among the most important intangibles that are within our Confederation.

We have worked together. We have nurtured friendships. We have shared each other's trials and tragedies. And yes, we've argued with each other. There have been moments of shared accomplishment, small and large, and yes, there have been moments of hurt feelings and there have been moments of disagreement. But in the difficult times, as well as in the good times, we have always held fast to a very, very deep faith that what we share is a source of strength and a source of creativity.

In the words of one Canadian, Robert L. Perry: "To agree to disagree, to harness diversity, to respect dissent—perhaps this is the real essence of Canada."

The consequences of breaking up Canada are profound for every region of this country.

My friends, this is not posturing. This is a statement of reality. A decision to unravel this country, Canada, will be irreversible, and no one should underestimate the cost of that unravelling.

The challenges we face are very real, but we're better off facing them together than apart. We have proved this time and time again over this past century. We've come too far together to break faith now.

A fair reading of our shared history in this federation shows that the political structures of this country have changed; they have changed to meet new challenges, and they will continue to change. It is precisely this flexibility that is our strength. And it is my conviction that as a country, a whole country that includes Quebec, we can embark on a new and an exciting period of change—change for the better, change for new growth, change for new prosperity.

The government and the people of Ontario want to undertake this task, and we want to undertake it in partnership with our fellow citizens and our friends in Quebec.

To them I say with a very open heart, we need your creativity, we need your energy, we need your intellectual rigour, we need the distinct qualities and the leadership that you have always brought to the Canadian family. We do not want you, our neighbours and our friends, to become citizens of a foreign country. Our common history is rich in accomplishments. We are convinced of the potential of our common future together.

As many Ontarians know, my wife, Janet, and I and our two sons make our home in North Bay. We are nearneighbours with the people of Timiskaming, Quebec, just across the Ottawa River. A river separates us but it does not divide us.

I shared recently at the Canadian Club the sense of Quebeckers and Ontarians, fathers and sons, daughters, mothers, fishing together in the Ottawa River.

I can recall growing up curling in the arena in Timiskaming. I can remember interchanges with our golf club, the North Bay Golf Club, and the Timiskaming Golf Club. Many of my neighbours work in Timiskaming at the mill just across the river.

I remember playing hockey, as most of us did as kids, in northeastern Ontario and in northwestern Quebec. I very vividly remember, in my Juvenile days—that was a division in hockey, not something else; I think it was the 16-to-18 age group at that time, so I was at the end of my hockey career—as part of the northern Ontario championship, the second division one had to embark upon. We lost in the final game, in overtime, the northern Ontario championship in a cold arena in Timiskaming, Quebec. They were part of northern Ontario, for hockey purposes. They were our friends.

We live and we work and we play together. We are Canadians together. I want our children and I want their children to continue to experience the richness this brings, that it brought to me, that it brought to our family and that I believe it will bring to them.

It is my sincere hope that we will be able to look back on October 30, 1995, as the day the people of Quebec said no to separation and said yes to Canada.

Nous aimons le Canada. Nous aimons le Québec. Merci.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I am very pleased to rise and join Mr Harris and Mr Rae in speaking to this all-party resolution in this Legislature. The word "historic" tends to be somewhat overused in our society, but I think we would all agree that, by any definition, Monday will be a historic day for the people of Quebec, the people of Ontario and the people of Canada.

There is probably no resolution that could come before this House that I want to support more than this one, and I know that is true for every member of my caucus. There are few issues we care about more than the future of our country. And yet we have all felt somewhat helpless to influence the outcome of something that affects us so deeply and matters to us so much. So I welcome today the opportunity to speak on behalf of my caucus and party and, as each leader will do, on behalf of all Ontarians, who share our concern. It is a welcome opportunity to speak from our hearts to the people of Quebec.

Over the past weeks there has been a voice slowly building strength across Ontario. It is a voice that was heard Tuesday in downtown Toronto, where thousands of people gathered as one to wave the maple leaf and the fleur-de-lis; a voice that will be heard tomorrow when tens of thousands of Ontarians from across the province board buses and cars to Montreal to deliver a personal message.

It is a voice that is being heard today in the Legislature. It is a voice that is reaching out to the people of Quebec, saying loudly and clearly: Together we have done so many great things in the past. Let us continue to link arms and to do even greater things in the future. Let us embrace the future with all its joys and sorrows, its challenges and rewards, and let us do it together. Let us not fill the future with regrets and recriminations for what might have been. Let us continue to build.

Throughout the pre-referendum debate and during the campaign, we have all respected the fact that this was a vote of Quebeckers, a decision the people of Quebec had to make. We still recognize and respect that.

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But how can we not be concerned when a consequence of their choice could be the breakup of our country? And how could we not be frustrated and concerned when the people of Quebec are told by separatist leaders that the consequences are something else than that? A key adviser to the Bloc québécois said this week that a Yes vote was not about breaking up a country, it was about creating a new country. Well, what does that mean to the future of Canada?

Negotiating an economic union is not creating a new country. Economic unions are between countries, countries which have already established unique national identifies, and economic union between an entity such as the rest of Canada and Quebec would not be a unified Canada, so Canada as we know it would be divided.

Mr Bouchard and Mr Parizeau are most certainly talking about the breaking up of Canada, and there can be no glossing over that reality. The question Quebeckers will vote on has been made deliberately ambiguous in order to gloss over that consequence. The question seems to suggest that separation would occur only if negotiations fail, so many Quebeckers, nearly one third of those who intend to vote Yes, believe a Yes vote will give the Quebec government a stronger hand to renew federalism.

Recently Mr Bouchard and Mr Parizeau have been much more open and direct in stating that a Yes vote is a vote for sovereignty. With the leaders on one side committed to separation, negotiations to renew the Canadian federation would have little chance of success. In any

event, Mr Bouchard and Mr Parizeau would make it clear that negotiations would be premised on a recognition of sovereignty.

So a Yes vote is not really a mandate to negotiate, even if it is subtly portrayed that way in order to gain the votes of people who would want to support a process of negotiation but not the breakup of their country. That is why we see Monday approach with a mixture of frustration and fear, and wonder how we can convey to the people of Quebec just how much we care.

There are tough realities that the breakup of the country would bring, not just to Quebec but to all of us, and those realities have been spelled out during the course of this campaign, not as threat but as unavoidable fact. We've seen some of the potential made real this week with the collapse of the dollar, although it appears to have been quietly shored up by the Quebec government to prevent the panic that a sense of reality would bring.

I do urge the people of Quebec to look closely to what Mr Bouchard and Mr Parizeau say a Yes vote means. They say it means sovereignty, but what does "sovereignty" mean to Mr Bouchard and Mr Parizeau? It doesn't mean renewed federalism; it doesn't mean administrative arrangements that will eliminate duplication and overlap of services in jurisdictions; it doesn't mean tearing down interprovincial trade barriers and a smoother flow of trade. It isn't code for anything to Mr Bouchard and Mr Parizeau. Sovereignty means sovereignty; separation means separation. There are no subliminal or hidden meanings. Sovereignty and separation mean exactly what they seem to mean.

I hope the people of Quebec will reflect long and hard on what it will mean if they are led down that road. It does mean saying goodbye to the Canadian passport and Canadian citizenship and the Canadian dollar, saying goodbye to the solid reputation for fairness and tolerance that Canadians enjoy around the world. It means saying goodbye to jobs, saying goodbye to both an Atlantic and Pacific nation, saying goodbye to a special economic relationship they enjoy today with the other Canadian provinces.

But the "hard reality" message is not the one I want to send today. The message I most want to convey is what this country means to me and why I don't want it to break up. I am proudly Canadian, and I can't speak those words today without being heartsick at the thought that the day would ever come when I couldn't say, "I am Canadian," with all that means to me.

Les Québécois et Québécoises vont bientôt prendre une décision qui aura des effets sur chacun de nous. Je ne me suis jamais sentie aussi impuissante à influencer les résultats de quelque chose qui me tient aussi profondément à coeur. Le Québec est une partie essentielle et intégrale de notre pays. La lutte continuelle des Canadiens et Canadiennes pour apprendre à vivre ensemble tout en respectant leurs différences et en célébrant notre diversité a contribué à nous donner notre force. C'est aussi ce qui nous rend typiquement Canadiens.

Canada, as I know and love it, would not be Canada without Quebec. It is not just the thought of the physical loss of Quebec, the creation of a geographically divided

country, that I find distressing; it's the idea of the loss of what Quebec means to me as a vital, integral part of this country. It's the reality of what Quebeckers have contributed, from the time of Cartier and Champlain as discoverers and founders. It is Quebec as a fundamental, inextricable part of our history.

I represent the riding of Fort William, which is some 1,400 kilometres from the Quebec border, and yet it too is closely tied to Quebec by history. Fort William was originally a fur-trading post of the North West Company of Montreal. It was the place of rendezvous, the place where the partners came from Montreal and met with the partners from the west to do the business of the day.

So the history of Quebec and Montreal is the history not only of my country but of my community. Quebec is not separate from what I, a Canadian from northwestern Ontario, am all about. Quebec is part of what I am.

And Quebec is part of what has shaped my beliefs as a Canadian. Our country is unique because for over 200 years we have struggled to deal with our realities in a way which is uniquely Canadian. We have committed ourselves to living side by side, respecting our differences and celebrating our diversity as a source of our strength.

We are constantly learning how to do this better. We will constantly have to keep learning and keep trying, but the effort itself, the commitment to find the ways to live together in mutual respect and admiration, not just as cordial neighbours and friends but as members of a family, each of us unique, committed to one another because we are family—that effort, that struggle, that commitment has made us what we are: a nation of tolerance, respected internationally as a peacekeeper, a nation where people care about equality and equal opportunity and a shared quality of life, a nation that has indeed become the greatest country in the world in which to live.

It is appropriate and I believe timely that we speak to this resolution in the Ontario Legislature today, because the relationship between Ontario and Quebec runs so deeply and is so interwoven that it almost defies description.

In part it's a historical relationship, because together we have worked to build a nation and together we have shed blood to preserve freedom and liberty for our own and other nations, and we are still doing so today.

It is an economic relationship. So many jobs and the financial stability of so many families depend on the trade we do with each other and the products and services we produce together and sell to the world.

It is a relationship that has been built person by person, family by family, because Quebec, as the Premier has said, is not some remote place that we have visited only on a map or via television and in which we have only a detached academic interest. To many of us here, Quebec is a place where we go to visit friends, to fish or to curl or to play hockey or to ski, to do business. It is a place where we seek out a sense of the roots we share and enjoy the culture that Quebeckers have always shared so freely with us. It is, quite simply, part of our home.

Above all else, the relationship between Ontario and Quebec is really an affair of the heart. There is love and there is passion. There is a bond that is greater than the sum total of all the little things on which the relationship has been built.

And let's be honest. As the Premier has acknowledged, as in any affair of the heart, there is occasional friction, there are disagreements. We have not, we do not, we probably never will see eye to eye on everything, and that's part of the beauty of diversity, part of the beauty of tolerance and part of the respect and understanding that is synonymous with the word "Canada."

And as in any relationship that is worth something, I believe that when you push through the rhetoric and the anger, when you see beyond the smoke that is sometimes put in front of us to cloud our eyes and our minds, there is something so good, so special and so filled with potential that it must be preserved.

I asked my daughters, one of whom is in the gallery today, what they would want me to say today to the people of Quebec, and they said, tell them that Canada would be a poorer place without Quebec, tell them that we can work together for positive change in a climate of optimism, tell them that a Yes vote would destroy the optimism and ask them to vote No.

A No vote will not be seen as saying no to anything except sovereignty, except to breaking up Canada. We will not take it as a sign that Quebeckers accept the status quo, because very few Canadians are happy with the status quo. We will not take it as a sign that Quebeckers are happy with our economy. There are not enough jobs yet, there is not yet enough opportunity, and no one is happy with the status quo of Canada's economy.

A No vote will mean that we will continue to look for new ways of making Canada work better, because that has been our history and it will continue to be our history.

I believe that Ontarians overwhelmingly want our friends and our neighbours in Quebec to work with us in building an even stronger, more prosperous and more united Canada, and I am very optimistic and hopeful that our friends and neighbours in the distinct society of Quebec will vote No to separation.

I said earlier that there was a voice calling out, and I say now to the people of Quebec that there are many voices calling out.

The voice of history is calling out, saying, "Let us not tear asunder that which so many generations have worked so hard to build and that which continues to be the envy of the world."

The voice of ordinary working Ontarians, farmers in the Niagara Peninsula, auto workers in Windsor, pulp and paper workers in my home town of Thunder Bay, people in every field across this province, that voice is calling out, saying, "Work with us to build a stronger economy and create jobs."

The voice of Ontarians who have been here for generations and the voice of new Ontarians who have come from every part of the world because of what Canada has to offer is calling out and saying, "Help us continue to build a country on a foundation of tolerance and understanding."

The voices are calling, and I hope and pray that the people of Quebec will listen to our voices. I hope they will continue with us on the grand adventure that is a model to the world.

On Tuesday morning, and for months and years to come, the people of Ontario and Quebec and across Canada will get up and say, "Je me souviens; I remember." I hope what they will remember is a bold decision to continue to build, to continue to understand, to continue to make better, to continue in a strong and united Canada.

Lundi prochain, j'espère que les Québécois et les Québécoises choisiront le Canada.

Mr Bob Rae (York South): As my colleagues have already said, it's not every day that the three of us agree not only to speak together in the House but to actually work on a resolution together and to share as much as we have shared over the last few days and weeks our concern about what we can do together.

I want to pay tribute to both of my colleagues for their willingness to continue to work together and to share in this important area. As the Premier said in his speech at the Canadian Club, this is a tradition in this House. It's really quite remarkable that while we have seen splits and divisions on almost every public question in the province, the one issue upon which we have always committed to working together as long as I can remember, and indeed going well back into the history of this province, is in the area of national unity.

My colleagues have spoken very, very well and eloquently. Perhaps the House will understand if I choose to give a bit of my remarks in English, but to give most of my remarks in the French language.

I say to my colleagues that one of the things we've heard from those who are advocating on behalf of the Yes is that it has proven to be impossible to change our Constitution in a way that is satisfactory to them and satisfactory to the people of Quebec. I would just say to them that, yes, it is difficult to change a constitution, and certainly when I look back on my recent political career, the first half of it at any rate, I think I can vouchsafe to say that it is indeed difficult to change a constitution, but it is far, far more difficult and far more dangerous to break up an entire country called Canada.

Much of what our colleagues in Quebec on the Yes side have said is that the history of our country is a history of misunderstanding, of betrayal, of treason of various kinds and of people letting each other down. I must say I have a very different sense of the history of our country. From my perspective, that does not really reflect the nature of the true partnership that we've created in Canada.

Nous avons un pays qui s'appelle le Canada aujourd'hui. Pourquoi ? Ce n'est pas à cause de l'Empire britannique ; ah, non. Ce n'est pas à cause du rapport du lord Durham ; absolument pas. C'est parce que les gens du Québec et de l'Ontario et des autres provinces ont décidé, entre les années 1840 et 1867, de créer des gouvernements responsables, et parce qu'ils ont reconnu qu'il était nécessaire de créer un pays qui serait le Canada uni mais qui reconnaîtrait nécessairement les droits, les

pouvoirs, les capacités des provinces et des peuples qui sont dans ces provinces.

Le Canada n'est pas un État unitaire. Nous sommes une fédération où les provinces ont des droits importants, des droits que nous reconnaissons tous et toutes, et où nous reconnaissons aussi la nécessité de créer un gouvernement national, fédéral, qui aura certains pouvoirs, mais des pouvoirs qui seront limités par la loi et par la constitution. C'est ce que nous avons.

Puis, quelle histoire, quel beau pays que nous avons. Quelle histoire de sacrifices des gens qui sont venus au Québec, en Ontario : les hivers longs et difficiles, les tempêtes ; des gens qui ont tout sacrifié pour leur vie, pour leur communauté, qui ensemble ont créé des communautés, qui ont travaillé dans les fermes, dans les usines ; qui, dans deux guerres mondiales, ont sacrifié ensemble les jeunes de l'Ontario d'une génération qui sont maintenant enterrés en France à cause de la défense de la démocratie, de ce que nous croyons important ici, et les jeunes du Québec aussi, à leurs côtés.

Est-ce que l'on a demandé, pendant la guerre, si on était Français ou Anglais en faisant le sacrifice nécessaire pour la démocratie ? Absolument pas ; aucune importance. Puis, quelle histoire que nous avons créée ensemble, même dans les années récentes, un pays où nous avons bâti ensemble une économie qui, naturellement, a ses problèmes, mais toujours une économie forte, des vies, des communautés qui sont fortes à travers le pays ; le Québec que nous voyons fort.

Quand j'entends M. Bouchard, il donne l'impression que c'est un Québec qui est, dans un sens, à genoux. Eh bien, ce n'est pas le Québec que je connais. Ce ne sont pas les Québécois que je connais. Nous voyons des communautés fortes, des gens d'entreprise qui ont donné du leadership, non seulement au Québec mais pour tout le pays. Nous voyons des gens qui travaillent dans tous les domaines avec confiance, avec fierté, et ce sont nos partenaires.

On n'est pas exactement, ici en Ontario, des conquérants. Nous sommes les fils des mêmes pionniers qui sont allés au Québec. Nous sommes des concitoyens dans un pays qui reconnaît et qui doit continuer de reconnaître le caractère distinct et spécifique du Québec.

Vous vous souvenez, Monsieur le Président, il y a deux fois dans les années récentes où cette Assemblée, cette législature, et même dans le référendum de Charlottetown, une majorité de la province, nous avons dit que oui, nous reconnaissons la société distincte au Québec; pas de problème. Nous reconnaissons que oui, la langue française, la culture, les institutions légales, ce sont des choses qui donnent un caractère distinct et spécifique au Québec. Et j'attends le jour où la constitution canadienne reconnaîtra spécifiquement et clairement cette réalité.

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Mais enfin, est-ce qu'il y a des doutes dans l'esprit de n'importe quelle personne dans cette Assemblée ou partout dans la province que nous ne reconnaîtrions pas cette réalité? Je ne pense pas. Nous le voyons chaque jour.

Il est vrai, comme je l'ai dit en anglais, qu'il est

difficile de changer une constitution. Moi, j'en sais quelque chose. Ce n'est pas facile. Mais il est même beaucoup plus difficile et beaucoup plus dangereux de briser un pays. Comme l'a dit si clairement et avec tant d'esprit et tant d'émotion M^{me} McLeod, elle a absolument raison que c'est ça le but des gens qui veulent encourager le Oui.

M. Bouchard et M. Parizeau, ils veulent créer un pays qui sera séparé du reste du Canada, spécifiquement lorsque nous parlons d'une autre province qui sera séparée de l'Ontario. Nous ne serons plus membres ensemble du même pays. Pour moi, il n'y a pas de façon facile, il n'y a pas de façon logique de le faire et je ne veux pas le faire. Je ne veux pas créer de problèmes, des difficultés que je vois clairement avec un Oui. Et puis on dit, «Eh ben, qu'est-ce que vous offrez pour qu'on vote Non ?» Eh bien, nous disons : «Nous offrons le Canada. C'est ce que nous offrons.» C'est ça, l'offre essentielle.

Nous offrons le Canada, ce qui veut dire un partenariat réel et concret, pas quelque chose proposé mais quelque chose qui existe. On n'a pas de douane et pas de frontière entre nous et la province de Québec, et nous pouvons assurer que ça va continuer seulement avec un Non. Seulement avec un Non lundi pouvons-nous compter sur l'avenir.

Nous savons qu'il y aura des problèmes ; oui. On ne peut pas avoir une vie sans problèmes. On ne peut pas promettre que les changements viendront sans beaucoup de débats, sans beaucoup de discussions. C'est important de continuer à travailler d'une façon réaliste dans l'administration, dans le travail qui doit se faire, dans des questions spécifiques, sur des problèmes réels, concrets et pratiques. En même temps, nous savons très bien que nous avons toujours un rendez-vous avec notre constitution et avec notre identité et avec notre avenir.

Je crois que nous sommes encore prêts à dire à tous le monde, «Oui nous voulons travailler pour que la constitution reflète qui nous sommes.» Tout le monde veut voir, dans la constitution du Canada, sa réflexion. C'est naturel. On veut savoir que l'identité québécoise est reconnue et respectée. C'est naturel et c'est ce que nous voulons tous ensemble. C'est naturel mais tout ça peut se faire seulement avec un Non.

Avec le Oui, personne ne sait ce qui va se passer. Personne ne peut offrir des garanties et des assurances sur ce qui va se passer, et c'est ça qui me trouble. Parce que, quand vous lisez l'histoire, tout le monde sait très bien que des choses peuvent arriver par accident.

Est-ce que vous pensez vraiment que toutes les choses qui sont arrivées dans l'histoire du monde étaient les conséquences des intentions claires et nettes de tout le monde qui avait voté dans une élection ou dans un référendum? Je ne pense pas. Quand nous voyons l'histoire du XX^e siècle, nous voyons beaucoup d'exemples très spécifiques, très difficiles, tragiques même, où la grande majorité des gens n'ont pas voulu les difficultés, les problèmes, même les catastrophes, qui sont arrivés après des décisions prises par hasard et par accident.

J'ai entendu hier même à la télévision un jeune Québécois qui a dit, «Bien, je vais voter Oui parce que je veux créer encore un rapport de force pour les négociations.»

«Est-ce que vous voulez briser le Canada, monsieur ?» «Ah, non, non, non, ça ne va pas se passer. Ce n'est pas notre intention.» Eh bien, soyons clairs : vous jouez avec le feu, monsieur, et c'est pourquoi nous voulons dire, pensez, réfléchissez, regardez l'exemple de l'histoire.

Oui, nous avons des défis. Oui, nous avons des problèmes. Oui, nous admettons que toutes les choses qui se sont passées depuis 1880 ne sont pas parfaites. On a commis des erreurs. C'est naturel; on n'est pas parfaits. Mais le Canada est beaucoup mieux, comme l'a dit Winston Churchill en parlant de la démocratie elle-même, que toutes les autres alternatives. C'est ça, le Canada.

So here we are once again at a very difficult moment in the life of a country. Again, in 1980, with the failure of the Meech Lake accord and all the events that we saw unfolding, with the efforts to amend the Constitution over Charlottetown, we've seen and felt great emotion, great feeling in our communities, great frustration.

But you know, above all I think in Quebec not simply is it important for Quebeckers to know that we care and that we love Canada, which is very true and very important for them to know, but it is very important for them to know something even more profound—and it was stated very eloquently by my colleague the member for Fort William, Mrs McLeod—I cannot imagine Canada without Quebec. I cannot imagine the country being still the country without Quebec.

Perhaps Quebeckers themselves are not well enough aware of how much we associate with them and associate with their history and see it as part of our own. Champlain and Cartier are part of our history. The successes that we've experienced, the tragedies that we've been through as a country, even the sporting events that we watch and see, whether it's the Olympics or the events that we all watch together, we celebrate.

We don't consider whether the last name is French or English or Italian or any other last name; if it's Canada, we celebrate together because this is a life and a history that we share.

So it is that once again we say to the people of Quebec that we seek change; we've demonstrated that. We want change that will accommodate all of us, including Quebec. We seek a Canada that remains united and that yet recognizes the need for deep and profound changes and adjustments.

But above all, we seek the understanding, the friendship and the common citizenship with the people of Quebec whose lives, whose communities, whose history is so much part of our own lives and our own communities and our own history.

We are left now in these last few days respecting the fact that Quebeckers will make a decision in this referendum, but I think it's quite right and fitting that we should express in the strongest possible terms our common desire to live and work together and to make Canada the great and peaceful place we know it can be.

Applause.

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The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Moved by Mr Harris, seconded by Mrs McLeod and Mr Rae:

This House resolves that the Legislature and the people of Ontario affirm that we value and cherish Canada and Quebec's distinctive character within our country. In partnership, Canadians have built a country that many people regard as the very best in the world. We have social, cultural and economic strengths that are the envy of virtually all nations.

Ontarians seek change in the federal system. We have demonstrated this commitment to change in the past and we continue to do so. The status quo is not acceptable. Ontario will be a strong ally for change within the Canadian federation. We agree that we need a more functional, harmonious country and a more flexible and decentralized federation.

This Legislature and the people of Ontario appeal to the people of Quebec with an open heart and with a generosity of spirit to remain a part of this country and to work together for change and progress within Canada.

All in favour of that resolution, say "aye."

Honourable members: Aye.

Mr Rae: I wonder if I could suggest we all stand and sing *O Canada*. I think it would make us all feel better if we did that.

The Speaker: I would certainly agree to that.

The members sang O Canada.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, may I ask that the record show unanimous support of this resolution by the members of this assembly.

The Speaker: The record shall show unanimous support.

Hon Mr Eves: Mr Speaker, may I have unanimous consent to make a personal statement to the House?

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed. JUSTIN EVES

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I was not able to do so yesterday, but it would be very remiss of me if I didn't, on behalf of Vicki, Natalie and myself, thank not only the members of this assembly but literally the thousands of people across this province who have given their sincere expression of support to our family over this very difficult period of time.

I must say to you that the support we have received has been overwhelming—members from all sides of this Legislature, pages and House officers, security staff, letters from people across this province whom we have never met but who have experienced similar tragedies in their lives and know the excruciating sorrow and pain that we have been through this last little while. I just want to say that without your support we could not have persevered.

Thanks to you, and thanks to Justin, his trust fund to help learning disabled and disadvantaged young people will give them the same opportunity that he had to contribute to society and to make a difference. Thanks to you, his kind and caring spirit will live on and will help others. God bless Justin and God bless all of you.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Any minister-

ial statements? There are none. It's time for oral question period. The member for Windsor-Walkerville.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): First, I'd like to say that, moi, je suis fier d'être député dans cette Assemblée, et je dis merci au premier ministre, à ma chef et au chef du troisième parti pour vos mots et pour votre inspiration. Dans ma ville de Windsor, nous espérons que le Québec votera Non. Nous voulons un pays uni. Nous aimons le Québec. Merci.

ORAL QUESTIONS

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): My question's for the Minister of Labour. Minister, over the last five years Ontario workers have seen an appalling increase in the number of critical accidents and occupational disease. Critical accidents have skyrocketed over 80% while the incidence of occupational disease has more than doubled.

During this time, field visits, inspections, orders issued and prosecutions have declined dramatically, with a 55% drop in inspections and a 38% reduction in field visits. Against this backdrop, could you please outline for this House today how you intend to ensure the health and safety of Ontario's workplaces?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): I share the concern for workers' health and safety that has been expressed by the member opposite. That was one of the reasons why shortly after our government took office and I was appointed to the position of Minister of Labour, we set up in this province a Workplace Health and Safety Review Team.

What we want to do is review how workplace health and safety is delivered in the province, what organizations are providing the training and how we can indeed ensure that we have in this province the safest workplaces possible. As you well know, that review panel is scheduled to report on December 20, and at that time we would hope to share with you and with all of the other people the recommendations of that committee.

Mr Duncan: Estimates released yesterday show that the previous government slashed the budget of the health and safety operations division of your ministry by more than 10%. A leaked document this summer suggested that you could possibly cut the health and safety inspectorate a further 20%. Will you please outline for this House today all of the alternatives, all of the options that your committee is considering in preparation for reporting to you on December 20?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Yes, approximately a week and a half ago I did refer to the fact that contrary to the direction that had been taken by the previous government, the NDP government, we were not going to further eliminate or decrease the number of health and safety inspectors in this province. In fact, we are freezing the number of health and safety inspectors because of our concern for workplace health and safety. Also, the results of the panel review will not be made public and I am not personally participating in the discussion.

As you know, we have an external body that has been appointed from across the province. So obviously the

results of that review will not be known until December 20. But again I say to people in this House, contrary to what the NDP did for the last five years, we will not be decreasing the number of workplace health and safety inspectors.

1440

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): What garbage. You're kicking the hell out of the workers. My God, put a bag over your face. Nobody believes that kind of nonsense. Give me a break.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order. The member for Cochrane South is out of order.

Mr Duncan: My final supplementary to the minister is along the same lines. One of the options that we've heard is being considered is the downloading or removal of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the safety inspectorate from your ministry into the Workers' Compensation Board.

If you pursue this option or if you choose to act on that kind of a recommendation, it's our view that you would be saddling Ontario's employers unfairly with the cost of health and safety enforcement and you would be giving up responsibility for this very important function to an organization that is proven not capable of handling the responsibilities it has now.

We believe that the whole health and safety enforcement unit is too important to treat in this manner. Will you agree with me today that the responsibility for ensuring compliance with Ontario's health and safety law should rest with the government, and will you put workers' minds at ease by stating unequivocally today that you will not undermine, through budget cuts or organizational reforms, the proper enforcement of workplace health and safety in Ontario?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, I share the same commitment to workplace health and safety as the member opposite, and I can certainly give you my personal assurance that any changes that we make will enhance and protect the rights of the individual worker in the workplace. In fact, we very shortly plan to make some additional announcements regarding personal initiatives that we are taking to promote workplace health and safety in the workplace.

Yes, we are considering focusing the need to put the prevention of workplace accidents under the WCB, and as you know, we are doing a medium-term review under the auspices of Mr Jackson, the minister responsible for the WCB. So I would indicate to you that is one of the areas that we're looking at, but we would do so and still protect the rights of the workers, and we would certainly have the additional government jurisdiction to do so.

The Speaker: New question, the member for Downsview.

M^{me} Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): Moi aussi je veux dire aux gens du Québec que nous avons une histoire commune et nous pouvons continuer à bâtir ce grand pays, le Canada.

LEGAL AID

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): My question is to the Attorney General, who is not here.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): He's on his way. Proceed with your question, please.

Ms Castrilli: Minister, your government campaigned during the last election on a promise to cut legal aid by some \$130 million. On September 13 of this year, you indicated that you were committed to the memorandum of understanding that had been signed by your predecessor government and the law society with respect to legal aid. You will remember that the memorandum indicated that the funding levels would be \$194 million in 1994-95, to be decreased to \$167 million in 1998-99.

Today's Toronto Star, Minister, reports that you are considering lending legal aid some \$60 million, but that \$60 million, however, is to be taken from the allocation to be given to the law society for the next year. I wonder if you might confirm the details of that story.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member very much for the question, because I wanted the opportunity to clarify the situation.

I can tell you that I have had discussions about many aspects of legal aid with the treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada. No request has been made for a loan, let alone any discussions of the amount of the loan. This was conveyed to the Toronto Star yesterday. They chose not to print that aspect of the article.

Ms Castrilli: Perhaps, Attorney General, you can give us an indication of what precisely your plans are with respect to legal aid. There seems to be some confusion as to whether the plan is going to be taken over, whether the plan is going to get a loan, whether there's in fact going to be a commitment to the memorandum of understanding. I think there is an issue here of accessibility to justice that the people of Ontario would like some information about.

Hon Mr Harnick: Again, I appreciate that question. As I've indicated, I have had discussions with the treasurer of the law society and the chairman of the legal aid committee and I have indicated to them, and they fully understand, that there will be no more money available to the legal aid plan than the moneys committed by the previous government in the memorandum of understanding.

I have had very frank and I hope productive discussions with the treasurer in that we understand, both of us, the necessity to work together to make sure that the plan, as it exists, fits the envelope of money that is available to it. As you were aware, the law society meets in convocation. They will be meeting in convocation, I understand, in November to discuss a package of reforms to ensure that the plan fits the amount of money available for legal aid funding.

Ms Castrilli: Minister, if I might just turn to another matter with respect to legal aid, I'm not sure that we're much further ahead. You know there's a crisis. The plan is underfunded. I think sitting on the sidelines in fact only adds to the crisis that's already there. You have indicated that you were going to have this matter looked into. I'm wondering if you could tell us about the status of the advisory committee that has been announced. Has it been set up? Have they met? Are they going to report? What are your plans?

Hon Mr Harnick: As discussions have been going on to determine the best method for the plan to be adjusted to fit the envelope, Mr Stan Beck, the former dean of the Osgoode Hall Law School, has been looking at the plan to try and constructively propose ways to make sure that the plan fits the envelope. Mr Beck has been working with officials of the law society and auditors who have been dealing with the legal aid plan, and Mr Beck, I hope, will be in a position to report to the government some time early in December.

We have to remember, and I appreciate your comment that you don't believe that this plan is funded enough, we can only fund the plan to the extent of moneys available and that the taxpayers can afford. The challenge for all of us, as the treasurer and I both recognize, is to ensure that quality legal services and access to justice are available to those who need the plan, and that is, quite simply, what we have been working to produce.

1450

FOOD SHOPPING LIST

Mr Bob Rae (York South): A question to the Minister of Community and Social Services: I'd like to ask the minister, following some of the questions I asked him and the Premier the other day, about his making good on the commitment he made to me on October 3 with respect to his suggested diet for people who are on social assistance.

You said on October 3: "I had some research done to indicate how and whether or not someone who is a sole single on benefits or a single parent with a child" and "we've actually provided a budget here," and: "I have it here in this binder. I'd be willing to share" it. I wonder if the minister can tell us why he has yet to produce a budget and a diet for a single parent with children, because I think the issue of children is most important.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I believe the documentation that was sent to the leader of the third party speaks for itself.

Let's look at the real issue here. The issue is not a shopping list that was compiled for my own information, which was never intended for distribution or advice. The fact remains that we are in the process of producing a meaningful tool for our front-line workers to help people who are on social assistance.

It's very easy to stand up and say, "Why aren't you doing this or that?" but the fact remains that for the last 10 years people have had the opportunity to address the real problem. The Premier indicated before, and I understand this is the case, that over \$40 billion was spent in the social assistance area over the last 10 years, and the caseloads have gone up 300%. Isn't this the problem we're looking at? This is why we are in the middle of transforming this system from one of a cycle of dependency into one of self-sufficiency.

Mr Rae: I can quite understand why the minister would like to change the subject and change the topic. It's understandable. But he asks, "Isn't this the subject?" No, actually the subject is the question I put to you—for today, at any rate—and that is, is the list which you released the same list which you had in your binder on October 3?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The difficulty here is that we've already provided a shopping list, and that's all it was, a shopping list. Frankly, a shopping list is not intended to give advice. I've already answered the question with respect to what it was worth.

Mr Rae: I've asked a very simple question. The minister perhaps doesn't understand the significance of his inability to answer the simplest question, but there is a very real issue as to the minister's credibility and how any member can rely effectively on what the minister has to say. These are very important questions that are, in my view, as much matters of substance as the ones which the minister would rather we turn our attention to.

If you look back at your answer on October 3, you said you had two budgets in your binder on that day. You said you had a budget for a single parent and you had a budget for a single parent with children. You then took 17 days to put out a proposed shopping list and budget for a single person.

I'm asking you now, is this list the same one you had in your binder on October 3, or did you have it changed? Second, where is the proposal for children? Where's your proposed diet for kids?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I'll answer a simple question very simply: The leader of the third party has gotten what he's going to get.

Unfortunately, this type of grandstanding doesn't speak to the real problem. The real problem in the province of Ontario is that we have been overspending. If the answer were to throw money at the problem, we'd have nobody on welfare today.

We're dealing with details now of something that really is insignificant. Let's deal with the real problem. The real problem is that unless we fix this system, there will be no future for our children in this province. It's about time for the leader of the third party to stand up and take responsibility for the fact that we're in this mess because he has created it.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Rae: As I say, I can understand the minister's desire to change the subject. I certainly know something about having to answer questions for a period of time; certainly I'm aware of that. But I say to the minister, as I prepare for my second round of supplementary questions, it's not my list, it's not my diet, it's not my budget—it's yours, and you still haven't come clean with what you told me on October 3. And that's something that will not go away.

MINISTRY ADVISER

Mr Bob Rae (York South): There's another issue I would like the minister to clarify for me. In answer to questions from various people, we now have a variety of different answers as to the nature of the contract which the ministry has apparently signed with the co-chairman of the 1993 federal Conservative Party campaign, Jan Dymond.

The minister went to some pains the other day, in response to questions to my colleague the leader of the official opposition, in saying that this person was not an

adviser to him, that she was an adviser to the ministry. This is a difference which I'm sure all of us would like to try to understand.

Perhaps the minister could tell us, what is the nature of the contract with Jan Dymond, what is the amount of the contract for Jan Dymond, and what were the circumstances under which this contract was let?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): What I will answer is the same answer I gave the last day, and that was the fact that the company of this individual has been retained to help us deal with long-range plans and programs for this ministry. This is clearly intended to allow for consultation and to allow for input and two-way dialogue with people who are going to be affected by such programs as workfare—we are fully committed to a mandatory workfare program, and thank you for the opportunity to let me say that—and that's the extent of it.

Mr Rae: This is a communications company, as I understand it, and Jan Dymond is, I'm advised, an expert on communications. I take it that if it's dealing with the long-range plans of the ministry, this is a long-range contract. Therefore, perhaps the minister would like to answer the parts of my question which he hasn't answered yet. How much is this contract for and for how long is it intended to last, if we're talking about the long-range plans of the ministry? I think we're entitled to some answers on that score.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: What this company has been retained for is to assist us with our long-range programs.

Mr Rae: The minister might think he's being cute. I don't know whether this is the advice he's been getting from Jan Dymond, whether this is the new style of answering questions, but I can suggest to the minister that it ain't gonna work, from my experience and what I've seen over the last 17 years.

I'd like to ask the minister, therefore, once again, what is the daily rate of the contract, how many days is the contract intended to last, and precisely what is it that she is doing on behalf of the minister?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Since the leader of the third party is so willing to draw upon his own experience, let's compare apples to apples here. The other day, in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition—a question was raised in terms of cost. Well, let's talk about cost for a second here.

Back when Mr Cooke was Minister of Education and Training in the last government, since we're talking about experience, Mr Cooke had 19 personal staff, and in comparative cost savings, my predecessor in the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Mr Silipo, had 15 people. That's a wonderful cost saving. Let's compare apples to apples: On my staff, we have nine staff members. I will finish. As we're talking about consultants, let's understand this: When Mr Cooke was the Minister of Education between 1993 and 1995, he paid 52 consultants a total of \$1.76 million.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): New question; the member for Ottawa Centre.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Etobicoke West is out of order.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): As you know, Mr Minister, the district health council in Ottawa is undertaking a task of reconfiguration of hospitals and health care services. The Mike Harris campaign document entitled Mike Harris: Five Commitments to Health Care, issued May 3, 1995, during the campaign, states:

"Building the right incentives into our health care system will be essential. Health care professionals will have a Mike Harris guarantee that savings they generate through their own initiative will not be siphoned off into other non-health-care-related programs."

1500

It goes on to say in that same document, "Local health care communities will share in any savings identified locally for re-investment in community priorities."

In the spirit of this promise, the district health council has incorporated, as one of its guiding principles for its review, "Savings that will result from reconfiguration should be reinvested locally to enhance affected services and infrastructure."

Mr Minister, I ask you, will you confirm today that the dollars saved locally through reconfiguration will not leave the Ottawa area and that they will be available for emerging local needs in health care?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): It is a good question from the honourable member for Ottawa Centre. I would respond that, yes, where local communities identify needs, where those dollars saved through restructuring projects need to be put in the local community, we will respect that and work with the district health council restructuring recommendations in those areas. However, when we address those needs, we'll also be looking at other needs throughout the province.

A couple of weeks ago, we opened a \$28-million cancer centre, a brand-new centre, in Ottawa. That centre was paid for from dollars throughout the provincial health care system. You could not have afforded to put that centre up without dollars from other areas of the province.

Therefore, yes, we will see some redistribution of dollars. However, it is important to note that, as with all the restructuring studies I've seen to date, most of the DHCs identify needs in their local areas, particularly in the areas of long-term care, home care and community-based services. We'll respect those needs and there will be reinvestments in those communities.

Mr Patten: Let me ask again. I think the minister is attempting to say "yes" and "perhaps" at the same time; yes, that there will be some.

If I might remind him of his campaign document, he said, "It's vital and essential that incentives are perceived to be beneficial to the local area," otherwise why would groups, in good faith, go through trying to identify savings in order to see money leave their area when they know they have emerging needs or growing needs in health care in other areas?

So let me ask you again, Mr Minister, if you would be prepared to make a specific commitment. What constitutes that there is an incentive for them to really make the saving? I take it this is not another Harris-ment: "This was said, but in fact we meant that. We wanted something over here, but now we want something over here." So they're redefinitions.

My question is, will you commit to telling the people in the Ottawa area that the savings they identify will stay there and that their budget level will be the same after they have gone through the review?

Hon Mr Wilson: Consistent with what the honourable member read to this House, the commitments we made during the campaign and prior to the campaign with respect to health care, is what I'm telling the House today and what I've told the House consistently since being appointed Minister of Health; that is, these hospital restructuring studies will identify local needs and we will respect those needs. There is no sense paring down the institutional side in a local community without beefing up community-based services. Will that be a dollar-for-dollar exchange? The answer is simply no. No government committed to that. If they did, they weren't honest.

How would we pay for CHEO, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa? How would we pay for the cancer centre? How would we pay for bone marrow? How would we pay for the cardiac centre, which I visited a couple of weeks ago?

If we allow the province to begin to bundle itself up as separate little health care pockets, that's no way to run a health care system in this province, and nobody else in the world encourages that. Yes, dollars are redistributed in priority areas, and all the people of eastern Ontario benefit from the cancer centre, they benefit from the heart institute and they benefit from CHEO, as all the people in this House benefit from Sick Kids and Toronto Hospital and the work that's done down at the Robarts institute, world-famous research.

Therefore, we have to recognize that yes, reinvestments will be made in local communities based on the priorities of those local communities, but also, dollars are needed so we can all benefit in these great things that all Ontarians have access to because we're willing to share our resources and actually create a true health care system in the province of Ontario.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training with regard to his comment in answer to a question from my colleague the member for London Centre earlier this week, in which he said, "This government has a concern for the wellbeing and the safety of school children across the province."

Is the minister aware that as a result of the cuts announced by this government with regard to highway maintenance, where each highway patrol has been increased in length to 190 kilometres from 115, the number of hours has been cut from 24 to 16, the number of plows on the road has been cut by 11%, and the number of staff has been cut by 125 seasonal staff, an official of the Ministry of Transportation yesterday stated

on CBC Radio that in rural Ontario school buses will be late this winter because plows will not be on the road as early each morning?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): In answer to the question, unfortunately I haven't got a prediction of the weather pattern for Ontario, either rural or urban, this year. However, I can assure the honourable member that I have spoken with the Minister of Transportation and he has assured me that we will ensure that the roads will be cleared this winter in the province of Ontario. Of course, everyone is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of school children, and I'm sure the boards responsible for the scheduling of transportation keep that in mind.

Mr Wildman: This is not speculation on my part. This is a statement by an official of the Ministry of Transportation, Mr Bob van Veen, who is the district engineer covering the area from Marathon, on the shore of Lake Superior, to Elliot Lake, about 2,000 kilometres of highways. He stated yesterday on CBC Radio that based on his projections, which he has to do in preparation for winter, plows that in the past would have been on the road at 6 am will now not get on the rural highways of Ontario until 7 am or 8 am, meaning that unless school bus drivers are prepared to risk the safety of students, they will have to be late; they will not be able to get to school for 9 am.

If the minister is aware of that, is he prepared now to repudiate the nonsensical cuts that are putting students at risk that his colleague, my pal Al, has introduced to this province?

Hon Mr Snobelen: The honourable member, on reflection, has probably spoken—I'm sure the honourable member has—to people from school boards across the province of Ontario in the course of his duties in this chamber and this House. I have met people from those school boards over the course of the last few months and I can assure you that they are and we are aware of and very deeply concerned about the safety of school children, and no school child will be put at risk in the province of Ontario. I am confident of that.

You should also know—the honourable member also probably does know this—that school bus drivers in this province are professional people and I'm sure they will not put a single child at risk.

1510

ONTARIO BUS INDUSTRIES INC

Mrs Janet Ecker (Durham West): To the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism: Yesterday in the House the member for Parry Sound made reference to the difficult financial situation that our government inherited from the previous administration. I would like to ask the minister about one contribution to that financial problem: the last-minute deal that the previous government did over the Ontario Bus Industries situation. It was done basically on the eve of the election, an unprecedented act for which the taxpayers are going to have to now pay a burden.

Can the minister please inform the House what has happened to the audit that he ordered into this situation and what he will plan to do with the audit report?

Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): I'd like to thank the member for Durham West for another very good question. I'd like to report that the audit itself has been completed and the report from KPMG is being studied at the present time. After a thorough review of its options, a final decision will be made by this government, but as yet that review has not yet been completed.

Mrs Ecker: Can the minister please inform the House when he expects that to take place?

Hon Mr Saunderson: The previous government spent over \$100 million of taxpayers' money to prop up OBI. One of their last actions was to sign a deal of questionable merit on the day before the most recent provincial election—the day before the provincial election.

It is essential in reviewing that deal that this government is careful and thorough in our consideration of the options; therefore, we have set no specific deadline for ourselves. But I can assure the member that this government is aiming for a timely resolution of this matter.

CLOSURE OF CAMPGROUNDS

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I have a question also for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Veteran members of the House will know that I've stood in my place many times to ask the former government to take action that would see a number of campgrounds in my area reopened to tourists and visitors alike. These parks have always been popular with local residents, tourists and many from beyond the boundaries, namely, Quebec and the United States.

After years of lobbying, the NDP government finally made a decision last December to offer a lease agreement to the private sector bidders who would operate the parks and pay a percentage back to the province. Unfortunately, the St Lawrence Parks Commission rejected the more than dozen submissions that were sent in, meaning the parks were still closed in the past summer.

Can the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism tell me what his government is doing to promote tourism partnerships and private sector enterprise so that the people who want to operate those parks may do so this coming summer?

Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): I appreciate the question raised by my honourable friend. Frankly, I would like to investigate a bit further into this situation and I will report back to him at a later date.

Mr Cleary: From dealing with the parks commission, I know officials are waiting for specific direction from this government. The previous administration used to say that the stumbling block was successor rights; however, that's no longer the case. In addition to the revenue that the government will collect from a lease deal, restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations and other small businesses in eastern Ontario will benefit if these parks are open. It's a win-win situation.

I'll just read from the Common Sense Revolution. It says:

"Many of the things that government does can be done cheaper, faster and better if the private sector is involved.... Bids are welcome from anyone who thinks they can do the same service better and cheaper."

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): What edition is that, John?

Mr Cleary: That's number 6. The sixth one.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Interjections.

Mr Cleary: Anyway, these parks have been closed much too long. Residents of eastern Ontario are not going to take no for an answer. I would like to ask the minister exactly when the private sector will be invited to bid for operating of the Raisin River and Charlottenburgh parks, and when does the minister foresee these parks being open to boost the local economy and job opportunities?

Hon Mr Saunderson: I'd like to respond to the honourable member's supplementary question as follows: This government believes that the best way to help businesses in Ontario is by restoring a healthy and friendly business climate, and we're going to do that by cutting the provincial personal income tax rates, we will balance the budget by reducing government spending and we will remove barriers to job creation, investment and economic growth.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question today is for the Minister of Housing. He knows of what I speak, because I've had conversation with him over the last number of weeks. It's not about your decision to cancel the non-profit housing program that our government had in place, but it's around the process and trying to bring some common sense to how we deal with the challenges that now face many of the boards of directors of these non-profit organizations and indeed some of the professionals in communities that are now left blowing in the wind with major costs.

I raise one in particular today. In Sault Ste Marie we have a complex that is half out of the ground. Winter is coming and the builder is trying to get some of the money back out of this that he has invested. He has now laid suit to the Neech-Ke-Wehn non-profit housing corporation to the tune of \$1.6 million.

I spoke to the builder, I've talked to the corporation and everybody involved in this. They're willing to sit down with your officials and try to come up with some reasonable commonsense resolution to this that doesn't leave us as government and them paying out millions of dollars, literally, to rectify something that could in fact cost less and provide a resource of—

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Mr Martin: —another at least eight units of family homes to the people of Sault Ste Marie.

I'll send over a copy of the pictures of this project to the minister so he can have a look at it. If you look really closely, you'll see that in the one picture you have children playing on one of the projects. It's also becoming a safety hazard to the neighbourhood.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Do you have a question? Please put it.

Mr Martin: Will you have your officials meet with the officials of this project so they can come up with some resolution that will be helpful to everybody concerned?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Yes.

Mr Martin: To the Minister of Housing: I certainly hope that he does. I'm happy to hear that he has agreed to a yes on this one. That was the first time we've gotten that from him in the conversations we've had to date. I will certainly be bringing that message back to this group and your officials will be hearing from them in the not-too-distant future.

Hon Mr Leach: As I've informed the honourable member before, our ministry is working with all the non-profit sponsors and we're going to resolve all of those situations. I informed the honourable member of that many days ago.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr Bill Vankoughnet (Frontenac-Addington): My question is for the Solicitor General. The Minister of Natural Resources recently announced that responsible Ontario firearms owners who currently have a firearms acquisition certificate, an FAC, will be able to renew them without taking a new test. Application must be made before December 31, 1995, after which time the federal law will require all firearms owners to apply to take an exam.

However, the federal authorities have not supplied the necessary forms required for people to acquire a new FAC. Could the Solicitor General explain what steps his ministry has taken to address this problem?

Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I want to take this opportunity as well to congratulate the Minister of Natural Resources for his initiative on recognizing responsible firearms owners in this province. He brought this forward as an opposition member, a resolution endorsed by this assembly but rejected by the former government, and in government he's brought this forward. I think he deserves that recognition today.

1520

This is a legitimate concern the member brings forward. I know the shortage of application forms has caused some inconvenience for our responsible firearms owners and I want to clarify that it is the responsibility of the federal government to supply FAC application forms, not the provincial government. I'm told that many gun owners have been referred to provincial members of Parliament to complain about the shortage, but they should be referred to their federal members.

I would like to advise the member that the office of the chief provincial firearms officer has been communicating with the RCMP to get more application forms into OPP detachments across the province. Initially we received an additional 15,000 forms and we are expecting another 15,000 applications by the end of next week.

Also, we have asked the RCMP to provide us with as many as 70,000 more forms in anticipation of requests from responsible gun owners and we're hopeful those

extra forms will be available by the end of November. Furthermore, we have contacted other provinces to see if they might provide application forms to us.

Mr Vankoughnet: I appreciate the Solicitor General has taken action to address this serious shortage of application forms, but there is still a very serious problem for gun owners who may wish to fill out their applications now. I'm wondering whether the minister has considered the problem that will still exist between now and when the FAC applications do arrive. Is there some type of remedial step that could be taken to accommodate gun owners until the FAC applications do arrive?

Hon Mr Runciman: The member is correct. It's because of the delay in receiving the extra forms that we've taken action to accommodate gun owners. My ministry issued a directive this week to all OPP detachments outlining that as long as the application process—

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): Time. This is a ministerial statement.

Hon Mr Runciman: —begins prior to December 31, the application would be eligible for the grandparenting provisions. In light of that fact, gun owners can fill out a photocopy of page 1 of the FAC applications.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is a time and place for ministerial stuff and he's abusing our ability to be able to put questions in this House by doing ministerial statements through question period.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): There's nothing out of order. New question. Wrap up your response quickly.

Hon Mr Runciman: Very quickly, they have to photocopy page 1 of the application process, and that will commence the process in terms of working in recognition of an application. Once the forms arrive from the federal government, OPP personnel will contact the gun owners who filled out the photocopy and they can fill out the applications from that point.

SUDBURY ACTION CENTRE FOR YOUTH

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services: Having visited the Sudbury Action Centre for Youth, I'm a bit perplexed about the elimination of funding to this facility, because it is my understanding that the services of this centre fit into the philosophy of the government in assisting people to get off the welfare system and into productive paid employment.

The success rate for this centre is phenomenal: 12,000 workers have filled 9,000 casual labour jobs, over 600 workers have received full-time employment and 160 workers have been placed in part-time jobs and 372 individuals have been returned to schools.

Mr Minister, my question to you is: Were or are you aware of the uniqueness of this centre as a job placement agency for troubled youth, and did you weigh this factor in deciding to eliminate funding to this centre?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'm afraid I missed the first part of the member's statement. I wasn't quite sure what the facility was called. Sorry, there was too much noise.

Mr Bartolucci: Sudbury Action Centre for Youth.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I would like if the member could possibly even meet with me to discuss this matter, because frankly I don't have the details out in front of me and I certainly would like to see if it's a workable plan.

Certainly, right now, I have to tell you that we are looking at various programs to create the mandatory workfare program and we are looking for any good programs. Frankly, we have a committee of MPPs right now, and there are a number of them, who are actually looking at various programs to see exactly what does fit within our philosophy really of getting people off the cycle of dependency and into self-sufficiency. So if the member would like to meet with me, certainly I would be pleased to do that.

Mr Bartolucci: Again to the minister, I'd be more than happy to meet with you, and at the same time maybe I can give you a petition that I'll be presenting in the House later, signed by several very, very prominent and caring Sudburians from the Liberals, from the New Democratic Party and also from the president of the Sudbury riding of the Progressive Conservative Party; also from a former Tory member from Nickel Belt. Can we get a firm commitment, then, Mr Minister, that you will reconsider your decision on this funding?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The commitment I will give to the member is to meet with him so we can discuss the facts. We're trying to approach this in a reasonable manner because we're looking for made-in-Ontario solutions for workfare.

Clearly, the real difficulty here is that, once again, we're looking at transforming the old system. The old system did not work. That means that we have to concentrate on getting Ontarians back to work, and clearly this is what the mandatory workfare program is about.

If I have an opportunity right now, Mr Speaker, clearly as part of this perhaps the member could speak to Mr Agostino, in terms of his musings in the papers these days, that certainly it doesn't benefit anybody right now, when we're trying to work together to find a solution for Ontario, when he is out there spreading rumours and fearmongering as usual.

Well, that's basically it. I just want to say it's unfortunate that Mr Agostino is not here today because I think that his hit of the day would be Twist and Shout: twist the facts and shout and hope people miss the facts.

CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Minister, I was intrigued by the question the member for Scarborough East asked you on October 17, 1995, and, to be frank, I was more intrigued by your answer.

The member asks, "...will the minister please inform the House the ways that her ministry will continue to support cultural diversity in Ontario?"

Your answer was: "We will work with cultural groups in this province to continue our support of their diversity"—their diversity. "For example, we'll support those groups that are in the best position to help new residents of this province, community-based organizations which

are best suited to help newcomers fully participate in the province's society."

I don't believe the member for Scarborough East can print the answer in his householder as it is. Can you, Minister, expound with a little more clarity how it is that you think you would help them to maintain their diversity?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I think probably the honourable member's question pertains to the fact that we recently, through the in-house restraint program, dealt with the closing of the Ontario welcome houses.

I said last week, and I'll repeat it again today, that since Ontario welcome houses opened about 22 years ago, there has indeed been significant growth in both the number and the maturity of organizations providing settlement services and language training programs to immigrants and refugees, and that was the reason that we felt we could close down those welcome houses. With this kind of infrastructure in place, the province can, I believe, responsibly and reasonably withdraw from this area of different service.

1530

Mr Marchese: I'm amazed that she can read minds. The answer that she gave is to my supplementary, not to the previous one, but none the less—

Interjection: After the supplementary, she'll answer the first question.

Mr Marchese: Maybe she'll answer my first question now. If the cuts to the community agencies and if the \$34-million cuts to this ministry are any indication of how she intends to help them to maintain their diversity, for lack of a better word, we are in deep doo-doo.

I want to remind her and the leader that you chopped millions of dollars in programs that support the following: citizenship development, access to professional trade demonstration fund, settlement and integration. You have eliminated the anti-racism project fund, the anti-racism operating fund and the anti-racism community placement program. You are eliminating the Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship. With a single stroke of the pen—Madam Minister, please pay attention, because I know you're having a difficult time with this—she eliminated five welcome houses in Hamilton, Mississauga, Scarborough, North York and Toronto. With a single stroke of the pen she did this, and I want to say the agency served 63,000 people.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Put your question, please.

Mr Marchese: These agencies ease the settlement process and help to make sure that the energy, skills and knowledge of new Canadians are captured, channelled into productive lives.

The question is the following, because I know—

The Speaker: Put the question.

Mr Marchese: —in their fantasy world of equality and inconsistencies, everything works well. But how can she explain how she can support them and gut services at the same time? How can she do that?

Hon Ms Mushinski: In response to the-

Mr Marchese: How do you support them and gut them at the same time?

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Ms Mushinski: If he'll let me answer the question, I will attempt to make it as comprehensive as possible. Let me say that this province still provides \$5.7 million to 69 community organizations that are providing effective settlement services and language training programs to immigrant communities. We will negotiate an immigration agreement with the federal government; we're committed to that. Settlement services will indeed be a very important component of that agreement.

We will still provide programs and services to over 500 native organizations and communities, for a service population of 160,000 individuals. The province has economic development programs that provide economic and development opportunities—

The Speaker: Would you wrap up your answer, please.

Hon Ms Mushinski: —for 126,000 aboriginal people. Operating funds that provide services to disabled persons have not been constrained. Citizens expressing their issues and concerns as individuals—

The Speaker: Order. The question has been answered. ONTARIO HYDRO RESTRUCTURING

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. Minister, in the Common Sense Revolution we committed ourselves to a 0% increase in Hydro rates. We've also committed ourselves to reforming and possibly privatizing some aspects of Ontario Hydro. Can the minister give any assurances that local utility companies within this province will be consulted or that a task force will be created with representation from local utilities as we discuss the future role of Ontario Hydro?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'd like to thank my colleague across the way for the question. I would like him to know and all members of the House to know that our government is guided in its deliberations with regard to the future of Ontario Hydro by the need to have competitive electricity rates and safe, reliable power.

I have met with many representatives from the electricity sector, including members from the municipal electricity—

Interjections.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): What about the enforcement branch of the ministry?

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Order.

Hon Mrs Elliott: I would like to assure my colleague that when I have been meeting with them and with others, we have been discussing their ideas about the reformation of electricity in Ontario. We will be meeting again and their views are most welcome.

Mr Smith: My supplemental question is to the same minister. Minister, what assurances can you offer the public that restructuring of Ontario Hydro will not mean

an offloading of debt to local utilities and ultimately the consumer?

Hon Mrs Elliott: It's important to note that this government considers the restructuring of electricity in Ontario a very important issue. We consider it to be serious, and our deliberations will be thoughtful and very considerate. Utilities are evolving, as the municipalities know. It is important that what happens to Ontario electricity allows municipalities and municipal electricities to be competitive. At this point it is too early to say how that restructuring will evolve, but I can assure the member that at this point in time there are no plans to transfer their debt to the municipal electricity utilities.

TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO MUNICIPALITIES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Just the other day I stood up before this House and asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs concerning the 20% cut in transfer payments to municipalities and the subsequent repercussions from these severe cuts. His response was, and I quote:

"The decision whether to raise taxes or not raise...taxes rests with the municipality." And I repeat for the minister his own words, "rests with the municipality."

It therefore comes as a surprise to us when the next day the Toronto Star reported that the minister stated, and I quote:

"Big spending cuts are coming in November and the province will not allow municipalities to raise taxes to make up the difference." And I'll repeat once more for the minister, "the province will not allow municipalities to raise taxes to make up the difference." My question is simple: Does the minister know what he's talking about or is this just standard Mulroney doubletalk or Harris baloney? Either way, can the minister explain his statement, please?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and **Housing):** I can assure you, honourable member, I know exactly what I'm talking about. The reporter from the Toronto Star didn't know what he was talking about. The responsibility for raising property taxes rests with the municipality; nobody else.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): I see somebody in the east gallery, the Honourable Tom Wells, an ex-member here.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): I move that the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1538 to 1608.

The Speaker: Mr Eves has moved that we proceed to orders of the day.

All those in favour will please rise.

All those opposed will please rise.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 65, the nays 29.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LABOUR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1995 LOI DE 1995 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE OUI CONCERNE LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL ET L'EMPLOI

Resuming the adjourned debate on Bill 7, An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations / Projet de loi 7, Loi visant à rétablir l'équilibre et la stabilité dans les relations de travail et à promouvoir la prospérité économique et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois en ce qui concerne les relations de travail.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): Call in the members for a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1611 to 1616.

The Speaker: Order. Members take their seats, please. Mrs Witmer has moved second reading of Bill 7. All those in favour, please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted Guzzo, Garry J. Baird, John R. Hardeman, Ernie Barrett, Toby Harnick, Charles Bassett, Isabel Hastings, John Beaubien, Marcel Hodgson, Chris Boushy, Dave Hudak, Tim Brown, Jim Jackson, Cameron Carr, Gary Johns, Helen Chudleigh, Ted Johnson, Bert Clement, Tony Johnson, David Danford, Harry Jordan, Leo DeFaria, Carl Kells, Morley Doyle, Ed Klees, Frank Ecker, Janet Leach, Al Elliott, Brenda Leadston, Gary L. Eves, Ernie L. Marland, Margaret Fisher, Barbara Maves, Bart Flaherty, Jim Munro, Julia Ford, Douglas B. Murdoch, Bill Fox, Gary Mushinski, Marilyn Froese, Tom Newman, Dan Gilchrist, Steve O'Toole, John Grimmett, Bill Ouellette, Jerry J.

Parker, John L. Pettit, Trevor Ross, Lillian Runciman, Bob Sampson, Rob Saunderson, William Shea, Derwyn Sheehan, Frank Skarica, Toni Smith, Bruce Snobelen, John Spina, Joseph Stewart, R. Gary Stockwell, Chris Tsubouchi, David H. Turnbull, David Vankoughnet, Bill Villeneuve, Noble Wettlaufer, Wayne Wilson, Jim Witmer, Elizabeth Wood, Bob

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick Bisson, Gilles Boyd, Marion Bradley, James J. Castrilli, Annamarie Christopherson, David

Curling, Alvin Duncan, Dwight Grandmaître, Bernard Gravelle, Michael Hampton, Howard Hoy, Pat

Martel, Shelley Martin, Tony Miclash, Frank North, Peter Sergio, Mario Silipo, Tony

Churley, Marilyn Colle, Mike Conway, Sean G. Cooke, David S. Kormos, Peter Lankin, Frances Laughren, Floyd Marchese, Rosario

Wildman, Bud Wood, Len

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 68, the nays 28.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, before we proceed to the next order of the day, I'd like to indicate the business of the House for next week, the week of October 30.

On Monday, October 30, we will continue with the second reading of Bill 8.

On Tuesday, October 31, pursuant to the government notice of motion passed, we will be proceeding with the committee of the whole and third reading stages of Bill 7.

On Wednesday, November 1, and Thursday, November 2, we'll be continuing with the debate on second reading of Bill 8. Should Bill 8 second reading be completed, we would then proceed to Bill 5, the Shortline Railways Act, and Bill 6, the Corporations Information Amendment Act.

On Thursday morning, November 2, private members' business, we will consider ballot item number 3, standing in the name of the member for Hamilton Centre, and ballot item number 4, standing in the name of the member for Norfolk.

JOB QUOTAS REPEAL ACT, 1995 LOI DE 1995 ABROGEANT LE CONTINGENTEMENT EN MATIÈRE D'EMPLOI

Ms Mushinski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to repeal job quotas and to restore meritbased employment practices in Ontario / Projet de loi 8, Loi abrogeant le contingentement en matière d'emploi et rétablissant en Ontario les pratiques d'emploi fondées sur le mérite.

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): Today we begin second reading of Bill 8. This bill, when passed by the Legislature, will repeal job quotas and will restore merit-based employment practices in this province. It will also restore hope to all people who want to compete for job opportunities based on their qualifications, based on their ability, based on merit.

Let me be clear about why this government believes the repeal of legislated hiring and promotion quotas is vitally important. There are four simple reasons: (1) They are unnecessary; (2) they are unfair; (3) they are ineffective; and (4) they are costly.

Let me expand on these four points.

Job quotas are unnecessary because discrimination is already against the law under the Human Rights Code. The code guarantees all Ontarians the right to equality and freedom from discrimination. We know that significant improvements to the Ontario Human Rights Commission have to be made to ensure that it helps victims of dis-

crimination more effectively and more efficiently, and this we have committed to do. We firmly believe the commission is the appropriate vehicle for dealing with complaints of discrimination.

Job quotas are unfair because they obstruct an employer's ability to hire on the merit principal, which is the hallmark of fair workplace policies and practices. Employers know that if they are going to gain a competitive edge in today's global marketplace, they have to maximize the use of all available resources, especially their human resources.

That's not only common sense, it's good business sense. Employers know that it's in their best interest to attract qualified people from the widest labour pool possible. They don't need legislation to force them to seek out diversity.

Time and time again, employers have told us that legislated quotas are not the way to go. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Business Consortium on Employment Equity, which represents 10 large employers, and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association are only a few of the groups that have emphasized that this legislation puts the province at a competitive disadvantage.

Job quotas are ineffective because they fail to address the root causes of the very issue they purport to address: discrimination. In fact, job quotas are not only ineffective in this regard, they are counterproductive. They exacerbate the problem because they create division in the workplace. By segregating people into groups, quotas put aside individual achievement and excellence. By restoring the merit principle, we recognize people for their accomplishments as individuals, not by the group to which they belong.

Last, but by no means least, job quotas are costly. In order to prepare to comply with job quota legislation, employers have spent thousands of dollars on a variety of complicated and time-consuming measures. In fact, it's likely that there are employers in this province who have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, and the government, in order to administer the cumbersome bureaucratic structure the legislation creates, has also had to spend millions of all-too-scarce taxpayers' dollars. These expenditures are all the more indefensible when you consider that they are unnecessary and could have been used to create jobs. Unnecessary administration is a cost that none of us can afford.

These four reasons make it obvious why this government is committed to repealing job quotas and to putting the merit principle back to work in Ontario.

Let me also be equally clear that discrimination has no place in this province. It is precisely because we are opposed to discrimination that we are opposed to job quotas, which remove fairness from human resource practices.

As an employer, the government has made a commitment to zero tolerance in our own workplaces and to leading by example, and we fully intend to keep these commitments. It is our intention, and we believe our resolve is fully supported by most Ontarians, to build a province in which individuals are assessed on their

qualifications and in which employers make employment decisions based on merit. In other words, we believe in equal opportunity for all Ontarians.

Our approach to equal opportunity is to help employers and employees implement fair workplace policies and practices through partnership and collaboration, not to hinder them from doing so through legislated intrusion and coercion. That is why we are committed to developing a workplace equal opportunity plan that is non-legislated, non-intrusive, cost-effective and built on partnerships. It will have three key components.

As I said earlier, many employers already recognize the importance of tapping into the diverse human resources that are available to them. Our plan will thus support employer and employee efforts to remove and prevent barriers that may obstruct them from doing so.

The workplace equal opportunity plan will also actively encourage initiatives that provide education and training on equal opportunity, and it will facilitate the sharing of equal opportunity experience and expertise that already exists in Ontario.

In addition, our workplace equal opportunity plan will be cost-effective. Just as one of our reasons for doing away with job quotas was the considerable costs they incurred, one of the tenets of our plan will be that it must be based on economic reality.

Repeal of job quotas will save employers significant compliance costs. It will save the government millions of dollars by winding down the bureaucracy that would have administered the quota law, and I can assure this Legislature that our plan will not entail the creation of yet another large bureaucracy.

While this government acknowledges the need to protect Ontarians from discrimination, discrimination will not end until we all recognize the dignity and worth of others. In the workplace, employers and employees all have a responsibility to build an environment in which the merit principle drives hiring and promotion decisions, in which there is zero tolerance for discrimination and in which equal opportunity is a reality.

But job quotas are not the vehicle to achieve this goal; in fact, they impede its realization. That is why, as we promised the people of this province, this government is determined that job quotas will be eliminated in Ontario. 1630

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Comments or questions?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Under comments or questions, do I have two minutes for this purpose? I'm just watching the clock up there.

One of the things I know the minister will want to ensure is that we don't have what is alleged to have existed in many circumstances, particularly in the public sector—I guess we have to make this case—as opposed to the private sector, and that is the nepotism which has taken place. There are many examples; the member knows as well as I do. She's served in municipal government and she's aware of what happens out there. There was always a feeling that a number of people were excluded from the opportunity of serving with certain public sector

employers because they didn't know somebody who worked in that establishment.

I heard you mention, Minister, that you were going to the system of merit. If people could be convinced genuinely that we would see merit as the only consideration when hiring and when promoting, I think there would be considerable support for that. Certainly, I have always felt that merit should be the overwhelming consideration when we're looking at whether a person is to be employed or whether a person is to be promoted or, for that matter, demoted or made unemployed by an employer. It should be based on performance and merit.

My concern at the present time is that over the years in the previous system many people were excluded on a quota basis because there seemed to be an unwritten quota of friends and relatives and cronies who seemed to get all the good jobs. I would be interested, if you get a chance to respond, in how you intend to overcome that particular problem, which has existed for so many years and excluded so many people, particularly those who are new or aren't part of the establishment in our province.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I'm glad to have the chance to respond to the minister's opening speech on this important bill. I want to pick up, actually, on a comment the member for St Catharines just made. I too would be very interested in hearing from the minister what her plans are to deal with the questions she raised herself, I think, when she introduced this legislation a week or so ago, in saying that in addition to repealing, as they are doing through this bill, the legislation we passed as an NDP government, they would take certain steps to enhance the merit principle. I haven't seen anything. I may have missed it, but I haven't seen any of that happen.

This government certainly has made this piece of legislation, at least, quite clear. We can't say, as we did on the labour legislation, that they've thrown into it a number of other measures beyond repealing the legislation. This particular piece of legislation is at least clear in the sense that it repeals the law, what has been up until now the law, that had been passed by the previous government, which sought to balance some historical inequities in this province and sought to deal with those inequities, not by establishing quotas, as the minister would like to lead us to believe, but by providing a number of mechanisms, all of which were there to provide opportunities, to create a more level playing field for the categories of individuals, including women, including people with disabilities, including people from visible minorities, to be able to, in effect, be treated more fairly and more equally.

I fail to see how the simple repeal of this legislation achieves the kind of merit approach that the minister claims is being done.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I rise today to comment on Bill 8. As a member of this government, during the election I heard very distinctly from people throughout my riding of Durham East that they were fed up with the systematic discrimination which was a result of the quota system of the previous legislation.

I support wholeheartedly the minister's recommendations to bring in fairness and hiring on the basis of merit and ability. It's a fundamental, reliable method. It gives business the freedom of choice for the reason of creating opportunity for both young and old. Regardless of disability or exceptionality, people will be given a fair opportunity and that's what this government's all about.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I wasn't going to speak on this particular bill, but I would like to caution the government side with respect to the proposed bills and hopefully some amendments that they will do as we move along.

It is not as simple as it looks, to bring in the equity and fairness in this very important piece of legislation. It is my hope that when the final say is pronounced in the final decision of this particular bill, serious consideration is given to the actual fairness of the bill. I am sure that, given the proper time and input from the various members of the House, the government side will actually listen as this will affect the entire community of our province.

It is a very important piece of legislation. It's not as simple as saying, "Let's eliminate the quota and let's make it fair." It is very often said and done that while we are trying to right some wrongs, we will make more wrong than right again.

I would hope that in proceeding with this particular piece of legislation the government will keep in mind the people who will be affected along the way and that fairness can really be brought in in such a way that it will not cause any disruption among our people and among the workforce. I hope that will be taken into consideration by the government.

Hon Ms Mushinski: While I appreciate the very thoughtful feedback I have received from the member for St Catharines, the member for Dovercourt, the member for Yorkview and the member for Durham East, I want to assure them that I take the issue of restoring fairness back into the workplace very seriously. I'm confident that we can indeed address their concerns as we go through the committee process.

I again want to reiterate that we are doing what we said we were going to do. We made a commitment to the people of Ontario that we would restore that fairness, and I make that commitment and repeat that based upon the feedback I have received from the honourable members today.

1640

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I didn't know that I would be speaking on this bill so early with this government which had, in its early time in the election and before, said it was going to amend the bill that was presented by the previous government. They say they are doing what they said they were going to do, and I should immediately tell you, Mr Speaker, before I start really speaking, that they're not doing what they said they were going to do.

As you know, today they brought in a two-page little thing called—I don't even call it an act—An Act to repeal job quotas and to restore merit-based employment practices in Ontario. That's the bill itself, a slash-and-burn and rip-up kind of bill, while they had said all along that they

were going to amend the part that said "merit," and that they liked our aspects of the bill. So let's start from that. That is not what this is about. This is all search and burn and rip out and throw out everything that exists.

Let me say this: This is a very important bill and an important aspect of things that we're moving in Ontario in regard to what we call employment equity. Let me also say that I have not come across anyone who is not in agreement, for employment and for equity. Everybody wants employment, if it pays well, and also equity in the system. So we're all for employment equity. It's how we go about it.

The fact is that the previous government was so bureaucratic—my colleague from Oakwood said that it's bureaucratic overkill, the last legislation that was in place, and I fully agree with that. I felt that this was really almost becoming a nightmare in the sense of the kind of bureaucratic legislation that was there. Again, I went along somehow with some aspects of it, but I couldn't support it, because somehow when we start cutting deals with other people within the society, it then breaks down the real legitimacy of equity.

What is employment equity? I'm not here to give you a lecture, or anyone, but just to remind myself and remind everyone else. It's about identifying systemic barriers in the workplace and, having identified them, going about eliminating them.

The problem with this government and its bill is that they hasn't even reached that stage yet. You must recognize the fact that exists in our society that there is discrimination that is systemic, especially in the workplace. You have not yet recognized that. You have completely ignored that there is systemic discrimination in our society.

The fact is, studies upon studies—I have them all here and many more to come—show in our society that there is systemic discrimination in regard to jobs and how we get promoted and how we are trained. Reports have shown there are five groups that are consistently and systemically discriminated against, and we know those groups. We have the women, the disabled community, the francophones, visible minorities—I'm missing out one again—five groups that have consistently been discriminated against in our society.

So how do we go about getting them back into the system? First, sometimes we use the carrot and the stick that we talk about, but what we are talking about is education and our legislation. I believe that both concepts will work, not only one.

There are people in our society who have been waiting for years upon years and decades upon decades hoping that those people would be educated in order to have access to jobs and opportunities in our society. They find that even with the education system, which even in itself discriminates about who gets into what profession, the fact is that people were systemically discriminating. We found that big bureaucracies and institutions did not have access to the disabled, and therefore there's no way they could have come in. So we have to have legislation for them to come in. They can't wait any more.

This government itself, in this bill, completely ignores the fact, to recognize that there is systemic discrimination in our society. There was one specific study that was done. We pleaded with the previous government, but again they ignored it completely. It's rather interesting, when you are in opposition, how supportive you are of those who are being banned from or not having access to some of the opportunities in our society, how supportive we are.

I can remember when the NDP was in opposition how much they supported a study done called Access to Trades and Professions in Ontario. They thought that this was one of the main answers, that people who were qualified were being shut out, systemically discriminated against in coming into their profession, and they felt that this was one of the main answers.

Lo and behold, they arrive as government, and what did they do? They completely ignored it. They again concentrated on their interest group, the unions, and cut many deals with the unions for seniority rights in order for promotion and seniority rights in order for layoffs, ignoring the fact that others in our society were consistently being shut out.

Those who had the merit and qualifications were a step back, because the fact is that if they were members of a union and had seniority in a job, that comes before qualification, that comes before merit. They would never listen, because we then started to ignore what the principle of fairness was all about: people who were shut out. Of course it really bugs them to know that here they are, they spent those four years and couldn't even address that.

But my motion will be directed to this government, which lays upon us that "We want to go back to merit." Let me tell you, Madam Minister, that many of the people who are systemically discriminated against have merit and they have the qualifications but are constantly shut out. Now you come here and you talk about all you have is a quota system and that's what we're going to deal with, ignoring the fact that what exists in our society today is a systemic discrimination shutting those five groups out of the workplace.

Now I just want to address another aspect of it. The minister talks about the bureaucracy and the cost that is being put to this previous bill, and so they went about with their slash-and-burn approach in taking away all that was put in place in order to identify even within the public service and the police services that there is systemic discrimination happening. When they put that structure in place, they came and put it away and said that no, it's not needed. It is some sort of coaxing and a carrot and stick that is going to encourage the police and all those who have systemically discriminated in allowing people within that system.

We have set up bureaucracy, Madam Minister, I agree. We have more bureaucracy in this province than we could ever dream of at times that deals with people's human rights. Look at, one, the Human Rights Commission, a big, huge bureaucracy with a huge lineup. People wait three, four years just to address concerns that are close to them, just to address the concern that they are being discriminated against in getting in because of whether

they're disabled, whether they are women or whether they are visible minorities or francophones—three, four years' wait. The backlog was enormous, because governments have starved those bureaucracies of both the money and the support that should be given.

We have the Ombudsman. To be honest with you, Mr Speaker, I'm not even quite sure what they do over there, because of the fact they criticize other bureaucracy for the long lineups and delays and they themselves have a hell of a backlog. Therefore, if someone goes to the Ombudsman to address the concern, they themselves have to wait three and four years because of the huge backlog.

Then they try the courts. Even there, the backlog and the delay that happens there denies people their human rights to address the fact that all they need in this society is to partake within and to contribute, as they would like.

So here we go again. We had one bill that came in. It went to such an extreme, the first bill from the NDP government, that at one stage we had advertisements coming out, saying, "White males may not apply." Whether that was a mistake or not, it distracted from the real issue of people who were shut out.

1650

Madam Minister, there are people in our society in Canada who are well educated. If we are concerned about the immigrant population that is coming here who people feel are taking away the jobs and they're not qualified, they are much more qualified on the basis of those who were born in Canada, have a higher education because that is the basis on which they could enter into Canada. So don't you worry about the merit itself and their qualifications. They will compete.

What are people asking for? People are asking to be treated fairly. So show me the rules that are given to any person—white, able, disabled—show me those rules and let me play by those rules too, but don't discriminate against me.

But there are some systemic things in place that cause us not to have that access, and one of those peoples we must look at very carefully is the disabled community. They themselves who are quite qualified and face a simple thing like this: You get your education, you get your profession, you arrive at this huge building and you can't even manoeuvre the access, the steps, the doors, to go in. They can't go in.

Then there are still companies within this country, in the province of Ontario—I understand that some don't even have a women's washroom. Now tell me, if you were a woman, Mr Speaker, would you apply for a job there? And if you feel that the individual would want to go on to apply for that job, they would just turn away and go somewhere else where they are welcome. But then that is limiting. It limits their opportunity for work. This limits the opportunity to produce in their society. They're second-class citizens themselves.

When we reduce this to two pages of saying that all that employment equity means to this government is to repeal it, repeal everything that was done, to dismantle everything that's done, it's telling me then they don't understand what it's all about, what the discrimination has

been all about, the pain and suffering, the people whom you have said must go out and work, those who have found themselves on welfare. Why? Because they have been shut out of the system, not because they don't want to work but because they've been discriminated against, because systematically they have been discriminated against.

We want a government, we want parliamentarians who sit here to recognize that and move forward on that kind of issue, but it's not being done. It's not done at all. The previous government failed in doing that because they got tied up in their own nightmare of bureaucracy, and now this government has decided that they will not—all they have concentrated on is the merit principle. There is more to it, Mr Speaker, lots more.

I recall when I sat on many committees and the now Minister of Labour was then the critic for employment equity. She herself said that she embraced some of the things that the NDP legislation was all about. Now, when she arrived, when this government arrived, what they have done is destroy that, really destroy the hopes and aspirations of people.

When people see government, they understand when they have to change policies and they understand when they have to have layoffs and they understand when they have to address deficits. But when a government goes about destroying the hopes and aspirations of people, then I tell you it's all over.

There are people out there who feel that their hopes and aspirations are being destroyed because there is no more hope for them, no more aspirations in the sense that some government will understand and recognize the fact that they are being discriminated against and they themselves would like to have this opportunity to participate.

It's a very sad thing to know that this government is going to rush it through because they feel within the two or three days that they deal with this they'll put it behind them and not have it any more. There are thousands and thousands of people who feel excluded out of the process. That's what liberalism is all about. We believe it's an inclusiveness, that everyone can participate; regardless of who they are and what they are, they can participate. And governments must address that issue to bring people onside, the business and the private individuals, in order to participate in our economy. And they feel very left out.

The concern that I have about this government too is there's a slash-and-burn approach to things. There's a section in here—I think it's subsection (5)—that says:

"Every person in possession of information collected from employees exclusively for the purpose of complying with part III of the Employment Equity Act, 1993 shall destroy the information as soon as reasonably possible after this act comes into force."

What this tells me is that there are companies that have been requested and directed by the government to follow and adhere to a certain form in gathering data and statistics, and now this government comes along telling them, almost by force, that "You must destroy them." I don't know if you violate any part of the Constitution, of those persons' rights to have those documents. You almost

sound like you have the Big Brother and the police are coming to tell you, "I'm going to check you out and see if you have those forms and then you should destroy them."

Many companies that felt that, yes, they will continue to do that, I hope you don't drive the living fear in them to say that they cannot use those forms. I'm sure they will continue to use those forms. Many of the companies, Madam Minister, are saying: "We will continue to do that because employment equity makes sense. It makes a lot of economic sense. It makes good business sense itself." And the fact is that if they feel that this government doesn't care and they can go about themselves to do anything they want, some companies may decide to throw that out and go about on their willy way and not finding that they have been discriminating against some of the people in not using an approach that has been laid down which could help.

You have put nothing in place, Madam Minister. This legislation laid no foundation, no direction, no guide, no structure whatsoever. It tells you that the status quo is all right. It tells you what is happening is wonderful. It tells you again that in this Canada, this Ontario, there is no discrimination; it's a wonderful place. If you don't survive it's because you're lazy, it's because you don't go on with the status quo.

We are saying the status quo of discrimination and systemic discrimination is not good enough for my Canada and my Ontario, or for the government. And if you go back to this, this is the status quo stuff; it says nothing. And what are all those hopes and aspirations? Where are they today? Where are my kids who feel that they can participate and feel because they are minorities they may not get access because they feel the status quo—who are telling you that they go to school, and I'm telling you and many other people that they are quite educated and they can't get in because maybe of the colour of their skin, or they can't access a building because some companies have not found it feasible to make access in a way in which they can manoeuvre up on those stairs to get jobs. Where are they?

The women who have fought all along even to be a person—as you know, they had to fight for that—and now arrive to say that this government did not see any urgency in order to have employment equity as a legislation and talking about a carrot to educate people. They have been educating those people for years—hundreds of years—and still we have discrimination. We have bureaucracies and all that kind of stuff.

You come along here and give this kind of stuff and call it your employment equity act. You should be ashamed of yourself over there to realize that you have no sensitivity to what's happening in our community. They're crying out to you and telling you, and: "We're just going to destroy those bureaucracies. We're going to destroy all of that."

It's a very bleak day for me to know that this is the approach that you are going to take. It's a bleak day to tell me that you, yourself, Madam Minister, who is supposed to be extremely sensitive—you have come from a community, you have come from a city, where that

diversity is celebrated. That diversity is celebrated in the course of the contribution that the diversity of that community is giving to Canada, to Ontario. And some of them are complaining each day that they are shut out of the system in hope that the government will recognize that—and to find, as I said, to see that the status quo was okay.

1700

It's not okay. It's not okay at all, and I hope that when we get to second reading, or when you go out, I hope you will go to that community and speak to that community, because it seems to me many of the hearings the previous governments have done—and they have done a lot and they heard a lot and we were educated a lot, all of us, about some of the systemic discrimination that is happening in our community, in our country, in our province, and then those acts, those laws started to reflect what is happening out there and address some of the concerns that are out there.

This does not address any of that. It tells you, "We have a mandate and we are big and bad and we will do what we can and the status quo is okay."

The status quo is not okay, because our country needs all of our people. One of the realities of Ontario and Canada is how much we are underpopulated. And we live a very high standard of living, and we want to make sure that everyone is carrying their weight and everyone is contributing. But when you continue to systematically discriminate and even the government itself ignores that, it really becomes a very sad moment for us; a very, very sad moment.

My main point is that they should start from the beginning to recognize the fact that there is systemic discrimination in our province, in our workplaces, and we must address that systemic discrimination.

My only other point I'd like to address before I sit down is that the professional organizations—and I know I'm going to come right in the heart of many of you who have been joining many professional organizations—have systemically discriminated against individuals from joining those organizations so they can practise their skills.

I would like to see you in this, Madam Minister, address those concerns. Stop shutting women out, stop shutting minorities out, stop shutting the disabled group out. Speak to those professional organizations. Then I would say to you, you are then not accepting the status quo. Go back and redraft this messy old stuff that has not addressed any part of systemic discrimination.

Our first aboriginal people have been discriminated against consistently for hundreds of years. I say to you, Mr Speaker, maybe you have more influence than I do in telling the minister, go back and do a proper employment equity legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I want to comment on what the member has spoken to in the last half-hour or so, and I want to say that I was the Chair of the justice committee and we dealt with employment equity for quite a long time. We heard a lot of deputations and we had an opportunity to listen to the opposition

members. I must say that the position of the Liberal members then in that committee was confusing at the time, and it still, in my view, continues to be confusing now. I want to say several things.

The member speaks about seniority and how awful that was. Mr Bradley's here, and I apologize for this, Mr Bradley. I recognize the enemy's over there on the other side, but from time to time we have differences with our colleagues in opposition, so it behooves me to speak to some of those matters.

The member speaks on the issue of seniority and speaks about how terribly that matter was dealt with and how we were catering to a special interest group and that that matter should have been dealt with because it's fundamentally wrong or it's a problem.

I have to tell you that a number of the people who came in front of the committee said that seniority is good. In relation to employment equity, seniority is good. Why? Because it treats people equally and fairly. There is no discrimination at all. So if you as a black person had been there for 15 years and you were ahead of a line, you get ahead of that line.

It's fair, it is equal, it treats people without discrimination. So for them to argue that somehow that was a bad principle that is fundamentally wrong is a mistake. I think some of them recognize it was a mistake, but I'm not quite sure.

I want to say as well that the entire Liberal caucus voted against Bill 79, the entire caucus voted against it then, and they will now vote against this bill. It's confusing.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member for Etobicoke West.

Applause.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): Thank you. Now, I only get two minutes.

I listened to my friend the member for Fort York. As always, he was enlightening and certainly—

Interjection.

Mr Stockwell: I know, but I just thought I'd give him a tip. But since you're not going to let me, I won't. I'll go directly to the Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I thought the speech was a little curious and certainly somewhat ambiguous. I say that very briefly and I want the member to answer very clearly the question that I have. You spoke for half an hour. Upon speaking, you touched on all the highlights of this particular piece of legislation, I suppose, in your mind, and then obviously the previous one that we are withdrawing, but not once in that period of time could I recall you telling us on this side of the Legislature or the people on your side, or the great unwashed, the general public, how it is you're going to vote.

I would think that if you've got half an hour's worth of speech in you to talk about a bill, and half an hour's worth of interesting thoughts and provoking items to bring to this Legislature, you could spend maybe 10 or 11 seconds by saying, "I am going to support the bill," or, "Gee, I'm not going to support the bill." That's the beauty

of democracy, you see: We get to vote at the end of the day. I'd like to know, directly to the member, are you supporting this one or are you going to vote against this one?

I guess the one point I'd like to make is that if you're true to form, sir, being the Liberal you are, you would have voted against the NDP bill, would probably vote against our bill, vote against Bill 40, vote against Bill 7, probably vote against everything because you're with the people, right?

Mr Bradley: I want to first of all compliment the member for Etobicoke West on his observations and on his tie, which was purchased by his daughter for him, so I cannot be critical of that.

I thought the member was very clear. I wondered why he said that. The Liberal Party has always been known as a party which believes in balance. On one extreme we have the New Democratic Party which, at least when it's not in government, is extreme; when it's in government it tends to be much more moderate, as we have seen. On the other extreme, we have the Conservatives. So we Liberals try to find what's best for everyone; we try to encompass what is best for the community at large.

We see problems with the legislation which has been presented. We saw some problems with the legislation that the previous administration had presented. If we had the opportunity to present legislation, you would notice that there would be a better balance struck than we find in this piece of legislation that's before us or the legislation which was brought in by the NDP government.

We have pointed out that the system which was in existence previous to the NDP legislation was not necessarily a fair one, that those who were in a position of power and influence were often able to get jobs that others were not able to. Many people were excluded because they were not friends of the people who were giving out the jobs or the people who were in key positions to influence who would get either the jobs or the recommendations for promotion.

On the other hand, we believe that quotas are not the answer, that in fact the true merit principle should be what we have in a bill. That I think is clearly what the member for Scarborough North had to say, and I found it very clear.

1710

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I must say that I found the member for Scarborough North's comments interesting, as he muddled through, and I would also say that I find myself in agreement with the member for Etobicoke West. This is a very, very odd situation for both myself and my friend from Etobicoke West.

I listened very carefully to the member for Scarborough North and to my friend from St Catharines, who tried to clarify the position. This is a very important piece of legislation. It's one that I think does draw some lines in this assembly. I think all of us recognize that.

This is a piece of legislation that purports to eliminate quotas. From our standpoint, and if one reads very carefully the legislation that is essentially being repealed, there were no quotas and never were quotas established.

It was an attempt to deal with systemic discrimination against people who are disadvantaged in our society, and have been historically. The suggestion is made that we could bring in some sort of voluntary approach which will not be legislated but will recognize that there are people who have been left out and have not been included and that there's some better way to do it.

The minister, in her remarks, did not make clear how that is going to be done, which I think is unfortunate, because she is asking us, on second reading, to support the legislation in principle. But at least she did make clear that she is withdrawing and repealing the legislation that was in effect from the previous administration. I'm afraid I did not get that from the member for Scarborough North or his colleague from St Catharines, and for that reason, and only that reason, I'm in agreement with my friend from Etobicoke West.

Mr Curling: I'm just delighted to respond to my colleagues and thank them for the support in which they saw the consistency in my speech. Also, I understand the confusion with the Conservatives and also with the NDP. I don't know if they're different. Anyhow, they look the same, because actually the Conservatives seem to think that if you're not on the side of business you're not on the side of anything, and the NDP feel if you're not on the side of unions you're not on the side of anything.

What we're saying is that the Liberals believe that businesses, unions and all the people—in other words, it's so confusing that when Liberals are shown to be very inclusive, that all people must participate, not interest groups only, they're saying, "We're not quite sure what the Liberals are saying." It's simple: We believe in the people of Ontario, regardless of businesses, unions, people who are not working, people who are working, people who have to go on welfare, who are disabled, the aboriginal people, women.

The real fact is that that's what government is all about. Beyond that, that is what employment equity is all about, to include all people so they can participate fully in society, not to be discriminated against in any systemic or endemic way. That's what we are, as legislators, to do.

They become confused, because they narrow themselves down that only business will do this and only business will deliver. The NDP narrow themselves down to say that only unions can deliver: "Give it to the unions and they will deliver." We are saying that they all have a role to play. I will say that while we of course are assessing, analysing and discussing this legislation, we will indicate at the appropriate time how we shall vote.

Mr Bradley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to seek the unanimous agreement of the House for the Liberal Party to use its 90 minutes on Monday rather than today. There were discussions that took place with the government and with the NDP on this.

The Deputy Speaker: Do we have consent? Agreed.

Mr Marchese: It is a pleasure for me to speak on Bill 8 and to be part of this debate. I think many of the people watching will learn something from this particular bill, as indeed they will have learned much about Bill 79, which they're repealing.

I'll try not to focus my remarks on the government members because I know they are infallible and probably will not listen much to what the opposition members might say. They might learn something, but I don't think they will listen to what we have to say. So I will try to speak directly to the people of Ontario.

I was the Chair of the standing committee on administration of justice, dealing with employment equity. We talked to a lot of people in Ontario. We had a lot of representations from many, many groups who talked to us about this bill, and I must say I learned a great deal and I think the members of that committee learned a great deal.

What we have learned is that Bill 8, which is called An Act to repeal job quotas and to restore merit-based employment practices in Ontario, is not true. We learned that what this bill is saying and the way it is titled are not true.

It is difficult, when we get into the area of truth and what is truth, how it's defined and what it means to different people. But what I want to talk about briefly is how this government has handled the truth on this very issue.

I want to get back to the campaign to talk about how they handled the truth on the issue of quotas, because when they spoke about employment equity during the election campaign they said this was a quota bill. They said it was unfair. They said, "We need to bring back the merit principle." That's about all they said. That's all they needed to say, because when you say employment equity is a quota bill, it alarms people. I understand that. It frightens people, because nobody wants an employment equity bill that brings quotas into the system. Nobody wants that. We certainly didn't want it. It's not in Bill 79.

But they knew better, and they were brilliant. This government was brilliant during the campaign because, rather than speaking to the truth of the matter—Mr Speaker, we can't speak about whether we have been misled or the people have been misled or that these things are lies. We can't say those things in the House; it's unparliamentary. So we can't talk about what they said. We have to talk about how they dealt with the truth, how they handle the truth, how they manipulate the truth. This is why I speak of this matter in the way they have dealt with this issue.

So they called it quotas then and they call it quotas now. It's brilliant. You have to respect that. I respect that. When politicians are able to manipulate the truth in the way they have, it's worthy of my respect.

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me. A point of order? Mr O'Toole: Yes, Mr Speaker. Listening to the comments being made by my fellow member, I think I hear him suggesting a mistruth, and I'm wondering if that's an acceptable suggestion.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I also listened very closely to my friend from Fort York, and I understand that he said it would be unparliamentary to say that the members opposite had misled or had not told the truth and therefore he would not say that. That's what I understood he said.

Mr Marchese: You're quite right.

The Deputy Speaker: I didn't hear anything that was unparliamentary.

Mr Marchese: I thank my colleague for coming to my defence and thank the Speaker for making a wise judgement on that. I was quite clear. In fact, the reason I'm speaking this way is to avoid that very problem, because we can't say those things. That is why we have to paraphrase elegantly to say what we can't say in this House.

So I have to praise them. They've done a good job during the campaign and by introducing the bill in the way they have. You see, they hope as we go through this bill and as we discuss it that the people of Ontario will not have the time to actually take a good look at Bill 79, to actually study what it says, that they won't ask any questions of us or people in the field who know.

They're relying on the community simply to listen to this title, the title that says, An Act to repeal job quotas and to restore merit-based employment practices in Ontario. It's brilliant. They are relying on the public to be tired, not to have the time to look at the details, not to probe and ask questions. That's why they present it this way.

1720

I have to say, as much as I think they've done a good job of presenting it in this fashion, that they are not dealing with the truth in the way I would like them to, for reasons of honesty, for reasons of doing some serious education of the public. In fact, rather than the education that I would expect them to do, they're doing the opposite; people, rather than learning something about why we introduced employment equity, are not going to learn a thing about it.

The emotional response of the people will be to say: "Good God, we don't want quotas. It's wrong, because what it means is that I, as a white male, will not get the job. What it means is that a person of colour, a person with a disability, an aboriginal person or a woman will get the job instead of me." That's not what it was about, but that's the way it was presented, and it's still being presented to the public in a way that confuses everyone. On the issue of quotas, it isn't true.

It did not guarantee a job—it does not guarantee a job—to the people we designated. It does not say: "Because you are black you will have a job. Because you're a woman you will have a job. Because you're disabled you will have a job. Because you're an aboriginal person you will have a job." It doesn't say that; it never did. I've heard the leader of the Liberal Party say that, and I disagree with her remarks because I think they're wrong, they are not correct. They're not handling the truth in the way it should be dealt with. Nowhere in that bill does it say that because of those characteristics those people will have the jobs. But that's what people believe, and the people I talk to in my riding and people I talk to outside of my riding believe that's the case. We've had a lot of discussion on it.

That's because they've been effective. They've been effective in sending the message to many people who are not part of these designated groups that they're not getting

the jobs because they're not black. They've never for a moment said, "We have an unemployment problem; there are no jobs."

In fact, because of the restructuring that's going on, thousands and thousands of people across Canada are being laid off. They're being laid off and they're not being taken back. In my view, and I worry about this, we're going to have permanent unemployment for a long, long time, and it's going to be higher than 3%, it's going to be higher than 4% and 5%; in fact, people are going to adjust their thoughts to 7% or 8% or 9% being all right as an unemployment figure.

It frightens me, but I believe that to be true. I believe that to be a very scary thing for me and my children, and I believe most of these members believe it will be a frightening thing for their children as well. But they never said, "We have an unemployment problem." They said: "Oh no, it's not an unemployment problem at all. Just vote for us; we'll create jobs."

I'm waiting for those jobs. I'm waiting with anticipation and a lot of glee to see those jobs rolling in, because now that the Tories are in power we're going to see a climate of investment, and all those people who didn't want to invest will all of a sudden, and all our children will have jobs, God bless. Thank you very much and God bless, but I don't think that's the case.

They never talked about unemployment. They said, "The reason you don't have a job is because of this employment equity bill and it's because it's a quota bill." That's what they said. Employment equity did not guarantee a job, it did not have fixed numbers, it's not imposed by the government; it was not a mandatory goals-and-timetables initiative by this government.

Numerical goals were set by the employers and the employees. It respects the amount of qualified people in the employer geographic area, it leaves the employer to make reasonable efforts and it makes it necessary, in having those numerical goals, to be able to measure progress. That's what that was about; it's not about quotas at all.

But you see, I know that they know that. They know that too, because it's—

Mr Wildman: Maybe they haven't read it.

Mr Marchese: Oh, no, they read it. It's part of a political plan. It's part of how you package it politically. They know that.

Mr Stockwell: No, a political plan in here? Come on.

Mr Marchese: Oh, it's a good plan.

Mr Stockwell: This place is full of politics. Come on.

Mr Marchese: It was a good plan, Mr Stockwell, and it worked. It worked for you. You did well. They read it, they understood it and they presented it in a way that had the maximum effect in the community, and it did; it worked.

To continue on what we were trying to do with employment equity, it urges employers to develop plans, to review employment policies and practices. The commission that we had set up helps, would have helped, to develop tools to remove systemic barriers; helps to remove barriers, not just physical but attitudinal. That's what the bill was intended to do.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Hey, Stockwell, come on down here where we can heckle. You can't heckle from up there.

The Deputy Speaker: Would the member for Grey-Owen Sound come to order.

Mr Murdoch: All right. Now I can go, see. I got on the record. Thank you very much.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that additional kind of piece of humour here.

We were trying to deal with systemic barriers. That was the point of the bill. It wasn't intended to deal with individual problems that individuals had, because we have the Human Rights Commission for that. The Human Rights Commission has been there for the last 20 or 30 years to deal with individual problems they have experienced in the workplace with discrimination.

We said, as the groups argued when they came in front of the committee, what we need is a bill that deals with systemic discrimination, because what we have in place does not deal with physical barriers, does not deal with attitudinal barriers that are in organizations and workplaces. That's why we introduced the bill.

We didn't do this from thin air. We didn't come to this conclusion on our own. There have been a number of studies to speak to this. Systemic discrimination has been verified in many ways, from Judge Rosalie Abella's 1984 royal commission reports; community and academic studies, Who Gets the Job?, Economic Council of Canada, and its effects include "a persistent and significant underrepresentation of equity-seeking groups in the workplace, independent of merit or readiness for the job." That was a wonderful report.

Women, people of colour, people with disabilities and aboriginal people use that study to be able to say there is an underrepresentation of these designated groups in the workplace. We know that. We didn't invent systemic discrimination. We are not saying without using any studies that this is happening. We have recourse to such studies to inform us and to teach us of the problems that are going on in workplaces.

I tell the minister, who's smiling very nicely, that she should refer to that report. It's Judge Rosalie Abella's 1984 royal commission report. It's a good report. I urge all the members to read it, because these reports speak to unfair practices in the workplace. These reports tell us there is an underrepresentation of people. These reports tell us that people's skills and knowledge are not being used. These reports help us to identify that we have problems in the workplace and to begin to deal with systemic barriers through Bill 79. These reports speak about aboriginal people. Some 80% unemployment exists among aboriginal people. This is a high number.

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Some people could say, "Well, they don't have the abilities," and some people probably do say that. Reasonable people, on the other hand, argue that is not the case, that there's something fundamentally wrong in the workplace that you should have such a high unemploy-

ment rate among aboriginal people, that you should have such high rates of people of colour not being taken in at the reception level or indeed in senior positions. This applies to women. This applies to people with disabilities. We know that. It's a fact, and I refer the members opposite to these studies that have been done so that they can be better informed about these statistics.

On the issue of merit, they've done a brilliant job, again, on confusing the public about the issue of merit. It makes it appear as if these designated groups don't have the ability. It says to women, to people of colour, to people with disabilities and aboriginal people: "You're not able. That's why we're going to scrap Bill 79 and introduce Bill 8 that brings back the merit principle." The merit principle, if it were properly put into place or properly applied, would have seen better representation of these designated groups, entire representation of these designated groups in those positions of responsibilities in the workplace.

If merit indeed was the principle or the tool that was used for hiring practices, women, people of colour and people with disabilities have said in the committee, "We would have been hired a long time ago." They said we should use the merit principle. None of the people who came in front of the committee said we shouldn't use the merit principle. They all agreed, because they say and said that, "If it was properly applied, we would be in those jobs, and the reason we're not in those jobs is because they are not applying the merit principle." It's because something else is going on in the workplace and in the hiring and promotion practices. Something else is going on.

I've been a trustee for eight years with the Toronto Board of Education, with my colleague Tony Silipo who was there, and we have seen, as people in positions of power and responsibility, how people get hired and how people get promoted. We have seen the barriers that stand in the way of certain people getting those jobs. We were there. We were part of those hiring practices. We have experienced it. We know what it means, and what we say is that we need to look very carefully at our attitudes and the policies and procedures that we have in place that move some people into positions of responsibility and keep some people out. We need to look at that very carefully.

I urge the members opposite, when they talk about becoming a model for good employment practices, to look at the people they've hired. I challenge them to show me the lists of the people they've hired. I challenge them to show me the names of the people they've hired in the ministries, to see how many of these people that we have that we were trying to help as the designated groups are in those positions.

My guess is that there aren't too many people. My guess is that we won't see too many of these designated groups in those positions. Prove me wrong, please. I want to be proven wrong. Show me the lists of the people you've hired. Bring them forth while we're having these discussions so that I could take that back, so that I could say: "This is wonderful. The government is proving me wrong. This is government. This is wonderful. The

government is leading, because they are showing in their ranks, both in the MPP offices and in the ministerial offices, that we have a great many of these people who are people of colour, disabled, aboriginal people and women." Please show me those lists, I challenge you, before the debate is over.

We're dealing here, Mr Speaker, and to the public, with a systemic problem. We're dealing here with the issue of bias. We're asking people to look at systemic bias. We're saying that we need to have objective standards governing hiring. If we had such objective standards governing hiring, there would be no need for employment equity legislation. There would be no need because bias will have been dealt with by having objective standards. The problem is of course that all standards that we have, prior to Bill 79 at least, are very, very subjective. Because these standards are subjective, we have an underrepresentation of designated groups in the workplace.

The lack of individuals from designated groups can be explained, at least especially in the high end of the workplace, in two ways: that it's a result of barriers to employment or that it is the result of group-based differences in abilities or merit.

We argue that most reasonable people reject the supremacist notion that some groups of people have more abilities or merit than other groups based on race, colour or gender. So we see that barriers to employment, both intentional and unintentional, must be addressed, and we argue, contrary to what the minister has said earlier, that employment equity is the efficient and effective vehicle to solve or at least to begin to deal with this problem.

In the plan that the minister speaks about, it talks, in number 4 of their six-point plan, about "helping victims of discrimination faster and more efficiently by reforming the Ontario Human Rights Commission.... Discrimination in employment is illegal," they say. "We will step up efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Human Rights Commission by reducing the commission's enormous backlog and focusing on the efforts of their work. Specifically," they say, "a portion of the money saved by winding down the commission set up to enforce the quotas"—again the word "quotas"—"will be redirected to the Human Rights Commission. We will introduce reforms to the commission to make it a more effective vehicle for the promotion and development of equity in Ontario."

We have a problem. The Human Rights Commission has had many problems over the years. In fact, during some of the committee hearings, we have learned and discovered that there is a big, long backlog in what they're doing. This government says, "We're going to fix that." They say, "We will put a portion of money saved by winding down the commission and redirect that to the Human Rights Commission." I think it's good. Oh, it's good. I think that if they do that, it's good. They say winding down the Employment Equity Commission is \$9.3 million and they said they will redirect some. It's good.

The question for us, for people listening, for people who have a case with the Human Rights Commission is, how much money will you redirect to the Human Rights

Commission? Is it \$200,000? Is it \$1 million? Is it \$2 million? How much, Minister? I challenge you, in this debate or at any other appropriate time that you have, to tell us, now or later—or perhaps never, is my view—how much of that money you will redirect to the Human Rights Commission. There are many groups that would urge you to redirect all of the money, but I am not convinced that this government wants to do that or will do that.

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But beyond the money problem, beyond the money issue, we have other problems. The Human Rights Commission needs to be looked at in terms of addressing other problems that it has. Many lawyers came in front of the `committee on government agencies when we dealt with this, making many, many suggestions of what more needs to be done. So we hope this government, in its desire to bring about equal opportunity and its desire to send matters of discrimination to the Human Rights Commission, will look at that.

Because, you see, I don't believe that putting more money is sufficient to deal with the human rights problems we have. I believe we need to deal with systemic discrimination, and that's why Bill 79 was in place. But the six-point plan doesn't deal with it. The human rights plan that you've got under number 4 doesn't deal with it either. So you've got to look at systemic problems that we have, you've got to look at how human rights are being dealt with, because I have to say to you and to the people watching, the Ombudsman herself is not taking complaints from the Human Rights Commission. That's how bad it is. It tells you of the enormity of the task and the problems that we are facing. That's why we introduced Bill 79, in part, but to a great degree to deal with systemic discrimination.

I want to use some examples of systemic barriers, just to show you, because I think it's useful for the members and the public to listen to some examples that have helped to bring us to where we were with Bill 79.

In 1990, the Bank of Montreal conducted a survey among about 2,000 of its employees across North America to determine, among other things, if there were attitudinal barriers to women's advancement at the bank. This deals with perceptions and reality at the Bank of Montreal.

The Bank of Montreal study found a significant difference between perception and reality concerning women at the bank. Perceptions—listen carefully to the perceptions:

"Women are less committed to their careers because they have babies and leave the bank while their children are young." This was the perception.

"More women need to be better educated to compete in significant numbers with men."

Let me go back to the reality with the first point: "Women are less committed to their careers because they have babies." The reality: "Women have longer service records than men at all levels except senior management."

The other point of the perception: "More women need to be better educated to compete in significant numbers with men." The reality: "At the non-management and junior management level, the prime feeder routes to more senior jobs, more women than men have degrees."

Another perception: "Women don't have the right stuff to compete with men for more senior positions." The reality: "A higher percentage of women are rated in Bank of Montreal's top two tiers of performance at all levels."

Perception: "Time will take care of the advancement of women at the bank." It's a good one, because it's true, many people opposite argue it should be volunteer and we should let people deal with this in an incremental sort of way, but don't impose anything on them. Eventually and in time, all things will come to a great deal of good. The reality around this issue, that time will take care of the advancement of women at the bank: "In the past six years, the number of senior managers has grown by 33% overall, while the number of female managers has grown by 1%."

Do you see the point that we are making here? This study is but one example, and we're happy to have this study, because it teaches the members opposite, I hope, some of the listeners, that we have indeed barriers in the workplace, that there are attitudinal changes that need to take place.

Mr Wildman: Is the bank an old boy's club?

Mr Marchese: It's an old boy's club; you can bet your life on that. What you've got to do in order to redress the inequities is that you need a bill like Bill 79, like the one we introduced. By eliminating this bill, Madam Minister, you're throwing us back. You can talk nicely about all the nice things you're going to do with employers to help them here and there; you're not going to do one single thing that will be helpful. Nothing that you speak of makes me reassured that whatever you're going to do is going to help to deal with the inequity in the workplace.

I want to be proven wrong by you, Madam Minister, I really do, and you have four long years, possibly longer, to prove to me that what you're doing with your six-point plan is going to correct the injustice, the unfairness in employment practices, the underemployment of certain groups or the unemployment of certain groups.

Mr Wildman: She doesn't believe that stuff is true.

Mr Marchese: It's quite true. My colleague Mr Wildman says that some of them probably don't believe this stuff is true, that if they've gotten here, they've gotten here on their own merit; and in the way that they got here through merit, all these other women can do it too. Well, the study proves that's not the case. The study of the Bank of Montreal shows that's not the case, that if you have the degrees, if you have the ability, that's not the case, that there are barriers in the workplace that need to be dealt with, and they need to be dealt with by governments getting involved, not by getting governments out of the way, not by stepping down and saying: "No, we can't do it. We don't want to do it."

You need to involve the government to solve problems where problems exist, where we know they will not be dealt with on their own, where we know that we need intervention to make things happen; and what we introduced was a bill, not a quota bill, but a bill that begins to redress the inequity in the workplace.

Section 33 of the Human Rights Code prohibits impeding investigation; it's an offence to impede investigation. I am worried for this government that if an employer faced a human rights complaint and if the data were to be destroyed, as they speak of, and it was relevant to the complaint, they would have a problem. I'm not a lawyer, but as I read it, if they destroy this data and there is a complaint before the Human Rights Commission and the data is relevant to that complaint, after they say, "Destroy that data," they have a problem. They could be taken to court, it seems to me.

I would urge this minister to look carefully at that, because I think they're making a serious mistake. In this bill, what they're saying is that they have to destroy the data. They're saying in subsection 1(5), "Every person in possession of information collected from employees exclusively for the purpose of complying with part III of the Employment Equity Act, 1993 shall destroy the information as soon as reasonably possible after this act comes into force."

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I think that's a mistake; I think it's wrong. I hope that they will be convinced that it's wrong, but I'm not sure. What they are in effect saying is that prior to September 1, 1994, you can keep data, it's all right, but from September 1 on you can't keep data; that's a problem. We think the inconsistency of the two is wrong; it's a problem.

We believe that if employers have the data, have done so in good conscience, in good faith, to be able to put into practice employment practices that will redress the inequities in their workplaces, they should be allowed to continue; that if the figures are kept in confidence for the purposes of an employment equity plan, not to use the Employment Equity Act but for an employment equity plan, then it's a good thing; that we should not oblige employers to destroy that data that, yes indeed, costs money to gather. They should not be allowed to destroy it but to use it, and if it's used consistent with what we had or even consistent with human rights clauses that make it possible for people to do this, then it's a good thing.

I urge this government not to be mulish in their presentation of bills, to look carefully at what it is that they're doing, because this very example shows that they're doing the wrong thing and that this should be reviewed.

I know I heard the minister say that there will be hearings or that it will be referred to committee. I take delight in that. Obviously they didn't feel the same way towards Bill 7, but they feel this way towards Bill 8. It shouldn't surprise me.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): You don't know that.

Mr Marchese: Well, that's what the minister said. She would not have said it had not her leader agreed to it or Mr Eves agreed to it. I'm assuming that these are things that they discussed and that they have agreed to have committee hearings. That's why she said it in the House today. So I'm delighted.

I wish they had the courage to do the same thing with Bill 7, but they don't, and the reason why they don't have the courage to do the same with Bill 7 is because they're afraid to go out and listen to the people. They're afraid to have people tell them that what they're doing is wrong. What they're hoping, however, with Bill 8 is that they're doing the right thing, so gleefully they say: "Let's go out with Bill 8. It's good for us because remember, this act is good. It says, 'An Act to repeal job quotas.' That's what got us elected, so let's take this bill out so we can sell it again."

I think it's brilliant. That's why I think they're doing it. For those who are listening, they should understand that this is political strategy. This is hardball we're talking about. "Bill 7 is bad and wrong, no hearings. Bill 8 is good because Bill 79 was bad, and we want to go out and listen to the people of Ontario because we want to hear from them what they say about Bill 8." They anticipate that what they will say about Bill 8 will support them; that's what they anticipate.

I think it's wrong. Mr Speaker, I tell you this again: The reason why I'm speaking to the people of Ontario is not just because they think they're infallible, but they don't listen. They don't listen in the House.

Mr Speaker, do me a favour: Turn to your right, turn your eyes to the right and just look at what the members are doing. They're having a committee meeting of 20. Mr Speaker, you're not looking. You're not doing me that favour. It's not nice.

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): I'm making notes. Come on, I'm making notes here.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Oh, they're paying attention. Thank you very much. You see, I don't expect you to agree with the things that I'm saying, nor do I anticipate that what I have said will convince you to moderate Bill 8. I don't expect that, but I do expect you to listen.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): You've got their attention now; they're listening.

Mr Marchese: I want to thank you, Mr Speaker, because I think you attracted their attention to my remarks.

Mr Stockwell: Yes, yes, yes. Just keep going. You don't want us to listen.

Mr Marchese: Mr Stockwell, now be polite because you're not in your seat. All right?

This bill does something that goes beyond Bill 79. It goes beyond it and it introduces other elements of the Education Act and the Police Services Act that I believe go beyond the scope of Bill 79 but do something more which I thought was very helpful.

The Police Services Act was one of the first efforts of employment equity in the province and is an integral component of community policing. They think it's a good thing. Perhaps they made a mistake—I'm not quite sure—but that was the intent of doing that. But the repealing of that particular part of the Police Services Act makes it difficult for that organization to be able to do equity in the workplace, because it is an integral part and component of community policing.

"Enough time has passed to assess the results. While efforts must continue to ensure that police forces fully reflect the communities, those forces and the communities they serve agree that a more diverse force means better police service: easier access to communities, a greater willingness to share information with law enforcers etc. Because police forces have come to realize that their employment equity helps them to do their job better, the Harris government's assertion that the merit principle is at odds with employment equity is completely unwarranted."

I have a quote from a friend who spoke to somebody in the police services who said, in their own words, "We have never compromised standards or lowered the bar to meet equity goals." They said that, and they said this while responding, while dealing with and obeying the Police Services Act. The person said, "We have never compromised standards or lowered the bar to meet equity goals."

It's proof. It's proof that what was introduced—and I believe it was introduced by the Liberals, to give them some credit—works. They, in complete disregard of what we have put into place, are repealing everything that's worked and everything about Bill 79 that could have worked.

In the Education Act, in a similar way, the education sector loses the legislative mandate to oversee employment equity planning for all boards of education. "Like police officers, teachers are powerful role models for children, and by changing the direction of policy in these sectors, the Tories have determined that the children of Ontario may not see themselves fully reflected in the larger picture." That's what they're doing.

By adding these two additional measures in this bill, by going as far as they have done, they are undoing things that even people in the field believe is good.

Why would you want to do this in the education sector? Surely in the education sector you would want to make sure it works. Ontario is very diverse. We have 101 languages spoken in Metropolitan Toronto, the GTA—101 languages. That means there are 101 different cultural

groups in the GTA. That's important. So we want to make sure that in the education sector in particular, although in the police services as well, and in so many other organizations, we are reflecting our population: that we have role models as teachers, that we have role models as vice-principals, that we have role models as principals and superintendents and directors and assistant directors of education.

Mr Stockwell: Caretakers.

Mr Marchese: Caretakers too. In fact, it's probably correct to say that these groups are overrepresented as caretakers, Mr Stockwell. It's probably true, probably overrepresented.

Mr Stockwell: No.

Mr Marchese: Oh, I can guarantee it. You say no, but I can guarantee it. I have been a teacher in the past, I have been a trustee for eight years, and I have seen it. In janitors, in caretakers, in those fields you likely see it. You're likely to see them as educational assistants as well. You'll probably get an employment equity group of people as assistant teachers.

Mr Wildman: And secretaries.

Mr Marchese: And secretaries, my colleague reminds me. Quite true. If you look at certain positions, they are not underrepresented there at all. In fact, they're overrepresented.

But we need to move beyond that particular field into other levels of responsibilities in the educational field, as an example, where we need to make sure that employment hiring practices address the needs of the designated groups that were included in employment equity. We don't have that now.

I know that in the Toronto Board of Education they have made tremendous strides in achieving employment equity.

The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean): It being past 6 of the clock, I adjourn the House until Monday at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Constituency

Member/Party

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Phillips, Gerry (L)

Gilchrist, Steve (PC)

Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of

Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs

Constituency

Scarborough-Agincourt

Scarborough East / -Est

Scarborough-Ellesmere

Scarborough Centre / -Centre Newman, Dan (PC)

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Tumbull, David (PC)

Rae, Bob (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique

Klees, Frank (PC)

Sergio, Mario (L)

Member/Party

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